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D E F E N C E

O F

Set or Prescribed Forms of Prayer;

B E I N G A N

A N S W E R

T O

Mr. *PHELPS*'s REMARKS upon a SERMON  
preached on that Subject, pursuant to the  
Will of Mr. *John Hutchins*, on St. Mark's  
Day, 1745, at the Church of St. *Mary-le-Bow*,

By the Rev. *THO. NEWTON, D. D.*  
*Rector of the said Church.*

Wherein the REMARKER's false Reasoning, and  
rude Treatment of the Doctor in particular, the  
Clergy in general, and Mr. *Hutchins*'s Trustees,  
are fairly consider'd and expos'd.

To which is added,

An EXAMINATION of Mr. *Phelps*'s Reflections upon Two  
Passages in another SERMON preach'd by Dr. *New-  
ton* before the Hon. House of Commons, at St. *Marga-  
ret's, Westminster*, December 18th, 1745, the Day ap-  
pointed for a General Fast.

In a LETTER to the AUTHOR.

By the Rev. Mr. *DOWNES*, Rector of St. Michael,  
Woodstreet, and Lecturer of St. *Mary-le-Bow*.

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*In Pace Bellum quæritas. CIC.*

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L O N D O N:

Printed for M. COOPER in Paternoster-Row, 1746.





## P R E F A C E.

**A**S it cannot but be highly pleasing to every sincere Christian, to observe the good Temper and Moderation which at present is preserv'd betwixt those of the established Church, and those who dissent from it; that they are not divided in Heart, however they are in Opinion, as heretofore; that they have learn'd to lay aside not only their Religious Heats and Animosities, but also their Sullenness and Stiffness in their mutual Dealings or Intercourses; and if they cannot agree to worship the Lord together in the Beauty of Holiness, yet they can each go his own Way without reproaching the other; and in short, that altho' the outward Wound of Separation is not healed, the inward Venom seems pretty well to have work'd itself out, which is the first Step towards a perfect Cure.

*Cure. As this good Temper and Moderation, I say, cannot but be pleasing to every sincere Christian, so consequently cannot it be displeasing to such, should any misguided Zealot arise on either Side to destroy or interrupt that mutual Kindness or Forbearance, if he is properly taken Notice of and exposed.*

*Whether or no Mr. Phelps hath not attempted this, I will leave every unprejudiced Reader to judge, who in his rude and rash Remarks upon Dr. Newton's Sermon on the Liturgy, observes, (a) that certain Protestant Divines have been pretty free in branding those that disclaim their Authority, and therefore dissent from their Communion, with those contemptuous Appellations, those Ecclesiastical Scarecrow-Words, Schismatick, Heretick, Fanatick, Enthusiast, &c. (b) That such are the assuming Airs of the established Clergy, that they take the unwarrantable Liberty of condemning Dissenters [with respect*  
*to*

(a) Remarks, pag. 15.

(b) Pag. 23.

# P R E F A C E.

v

‘ to their Manner of Praying] unheard,  
 ‘ and speak Evil of the Things they know  
 ‘ not.—(c) That not one in fifty of them  
 ‘ believe the Articles they subscribe,  
 ‘ suggesting also, that they are no more  
 ‘ sincere in their Prayers than in their  
 ‘ Subscriptions (d), but appear before  
 ‘ their Heavenly Father with Falshood in  
 ‘ their Mouths, and Insincerity in their  
 ‘ Hearts.—(e) That our Liturgy is pre-  
 ‘ scrib’d by Power and enforc’d by Penal-  
 ‘ ties, a Complaint only excusable in a State  
 ‘ of Intolerance. (f) That the Body of the  
 ‘ Clergy are the grand Opposers of the  
 ‘ Test-Act, that unrighteous, detestable  
 ‘ Law. — (g) And that there are no  
 ‘ greater Causes of the Propagation of  
 ‘ Immorality and Infidelity amongst us,  
 ‘ than their Subscriptions to Articles  
 ‘ which they do not believe, and Admis-  
 ‘ sion of those to the Lord’s Supper,  
 ‘ whom they know to be unworthy, &c.’

Of all the Scarecrow Names he invi-  
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 there

(c) Pag. 17. (d) Pag. 55. (e) Pag. 51.

(f) Pag. 71. (g) Ibid.



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(f) Pag. 71. (g) Ibid.

*there is not one contemptuous enough for such a Writer.*

*But perhaps it may be said in his Vindication, that Dr. Newton was the Aggressor : And indeed Mr. Phelps doth accuse him of ‘ (g)plentifully throwing out ‘ censorious and uncharitable Reflecti- ‘ ons against Protestant Dissenters.’ But wherein ? Did he upbraid them with those Scarecrow-Names, which (at a Time when an intemperate Zeal had almost eaten up all Charity on both Sides) Dissenters were too apt to fix upon the established Clergy, viz. Superstitious, Idolatrous, Popish, &c ? Did he pronounce forty-nine out of fifty to be errant Hypocrites ? or assert that they did not dissent upon Principle, but that their Scruples were political, or conceited, or any thing rather than conscientious ? Did he envy them the Liberty they enjoy, or censure them for the Abuse of it ? Or lastly, did he impute the Infidelity or Immorality of the Age to their Separation ? No, this is Mr. Phelps’s peculiar manner of exercising that ‘ (h) Charity and*

*mu.*



*' mutual Forbearance so frequently en-  
 ' joined in the New Testament ; (i) that  
 ' Candour and Affection towards those  
 ' who are not of the same Sentiments with  
 ' himself, which is the sublimest Virtue of  
 ' a Christian ; (k) that Charity, of which  
 ' this most sublime and elegant Encomi-  
 ' um is given, that it is the Bond of Per-  
 ' fection.' — But Mr. Phelps further  
 complains, (l) that the Doctor hath  
 thrown a great deal of Insult and Con-  
 tempt upon the Method of free and un-  
 prescribed Prayer, and therefore, I sup-  
 pose, he concluded he might be as free  
 and unlimited as he pleas'd, in insulting  
 the Church and the Clergy. But here-  
 in again I apprehend he is mistaken. The  
 Dr, 'tis true, has spoke a little freely of  
 extemporary Prayer ; but if, as I have  
 shew'd in the following Pages, Dr. Watts  
 hath us'd still greater Freedom upon the  
 same Subject, that surely ought not to  
 be thought Provocation sufficient to a-  
 wake Mr. Phelps's Vengeance, however  
 his falling foul upon the Clergy in gene-  
 ral,*

(i) Ibid. (k) Ibid. (l) Preface pag. i.

*ral, from this only suppos'd Affront, may be a just Reason for any one of that injur'd Body to rebuke his Forwardness and expose his Folly. And I hope all moderate Dissenters will be so far from suspecting me of wanting the same Moderation, that they will rather join with me in discountenancing a rude and turbulent Writer, who by rifling into old Sores, and raising up former and almost forgotten Quarrels from their dying Embers, is labouring to subvert that good Harmony which now subsists (and may it ever continue and increase) betwixt them and their Brethren of the Conformity.*



A  
D E F E N C E  
O F

Prescribed Forms of Prayer, &c.

S I R,



O W E V E R Dr. *Newton's* Sermon upon the Liturgy might provoke you to treat its Author so rudely, the Pleasure you confessedly received from the Publication should, one would think, have at least intitled the Gentlemen at whose Request it was published, to more civil Usage. As by such Request they have given you the *wish'd-for* Opportunity of triumphing over the Doctor, how could you be so heard-hearted, as to censure them for want of Charity, or sneer at them for want of *Greek*? *Besides*, your Censure is not more unkind than unjust, and you yourself are apparently guilty of that Uncharitableness of which you accuse them. How do you know but they might wish the  
B Doctor's



Doctor's Discourse to be published for the same Reason that you did, *viz.* to the End that his Objections to extemporary Prayer (which you all along confound with free and unprescribed) might be open to every Examiner?

And then as to your sarcastical Wipe, where you say, you have translated your Motto, *lest any of them should suspect some latent Reflection to be contained in it*; they perhaps may be even with you, by observing, that if they are to have such Suspicion of every Passage in your Book that they do not understand, your Explanation ought to have gone farther than your Motto; some Writers having the Talent of rendering themselves unintelligible in whatever Language they write.

Having rallied the Trustees for their Request, the Doctor is next to be taken to Task for his Backwardness in complying with it. For this you are at a great loss to conceive what Reason can be assigned, and after guessing for some time, you at last seem willing to resolve it into his Modesty. But here again, alas! you find an Inconsistency; for, Why then is he so magisterial in his *Sermon*? How can he be so dogmatical in his *Discourse* (a), and so excessively bashful in his *Dedication*? That the Doctor may be modest even to Excess, in the *one*, we can readily grant; but a certain great Man would have told you on the like Occasion, that 'tis cruel to upbraid him for his Natural Infirmities, since it might

might have pleased God to have given you a little more Modesty. But that he's positive and magisterial in the *other*, I am not able to discover. It is true, he asserts many Things which you have thought proper to deny ; but whether his Assertions, or your Negations, are most positive and magisterial, will appear by and by.

The first Thing the Doctor lays down, to which you have any Objection, is, ' that in the ' Prayer, commonly called the *Lord's Prayer*, ' its divine Author hath taught us not only the ' true Object of Worship, but also the best ' Method of worshiping him; not only what ' Petitions we are to offer at the Throne of ' Grace, but also the Form and Manner where- ' in we are to offer them.' Which you will have, is saying (b) *a great deal more than he can justify* ; and roundly affirm, that *as for the Object of Worship, there is no Discovery made at all* in that Prayer. You can't mean that it is silent as to the Object of divine Worship, you yourself have not so much Assurance ; you must therefore intend, that the Mention therein made of such Object is no new Discovery ; which is the poorest Quibble. But whatever is your Meaning, 'tis here quite impertinent to the Point in Question, which is not about the Object, but the *Manner* of Worship. — You go on, (c) *Neither doth our Lord so properly teach them [the Disciples] or us, the*

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Petitions

(b) Page 8.

(c) Ibid.

*Petitions we are to offer, as exemplify in Miniature the Substance of what we are to enlarge upon in the various Parts of Prayer.* By which you suggest, that the Lord's Prayer is not so much a Form of, as a Directory for Prayer. The Doctor speaks of it as a Form, and he speaks the Sentiments of the primitive Fathers. *Tertullian, Cyprian, St Austin, and Chrysostom* expressly call it a Form of Prayer. Here then is something more than *his own positive Assertion*, something better than (d) *Authorities borrowed from the Romish Magazine.* But I should be glad to know out of what Magazine you will borrow Authorities to support you in the contrary Assertion, for as yet we have only your bare Word for it. —As to the Form and Manner wherein we are to offer them, say you (e), *the Doctor cannot mean what the Words seem to intend, that we are to offer those Petitions and none else, &c.* What the Doctor means is very obvious, and as clearly expressed. His Design being to vindicate set Forms of Prayer, and particularly that of the Church of *England*, he introduceth it very aptly, by shewing our blessed Saviour teaching his Disciples to pray by a Form; teaching them not only what Petitions they were to offer, but also the Form and Manner wherein they were to offer them; and in them also teaching us. By what sort of Reasoning now would you infer, that the Doctor, by mentioning this, excludes the use of every other Form?

or



or how was it possible for you to conclude for him in any other Manner than this? Our Saviour prescribed a Form to his Disciples, therefore Forms are lawful and expedient.

Your Remark upon the Doctor's Observation, that *there are some who are for pouring out their Spirit in extemporary Prayers, and utterly condemn all Forms*, is no less trifling. You say (f), *you never met with any Believer of Christianity, but what professed to be thankful for every part of the Revelation, and particularly acknowledged the Usefulness of the Lord's Prayer, as a comprehensive Summary of Prayer in general, and allowed the same of every Prayer we meet with, either in the Old or New Testament.*——But pray, Sir, do you know of none who think they want no Assistances and Instructions from Forms of Prayer of human Composure? Do you know of none who are much given to extemporary Prayer? of none who disapprove of set Forms? of none who are such Enemies to them, that they rather choose to call the Lord's Prayer, or those found in the two Testaments, Summaries, than Forms of Prayer? If you know of none such as these, then the Doctor's Observation was useless; if you do, your Remark is disingenuous. Well, (g) *but you must still ask the Doctor's Pardon, if allowing them to be Forms, you cannot agree to his Conclusion from Forms of Prayer recorded in Scripture, in favour of Forms of human*

*human Composure ; as though these had any Pretensions to the like Regard, or that any set of Christians, however dignified or distinguished, have any manner of Right to demand the same Respect.* The Doctor, doubtless, will readily excuse you for not agreeing to a Conclusion he never made, nor thought of, that Human Compositions are to be held in equal Reverence and Esteem with Divine. But the Forms recorded in Scripture, whether you will allow it or not, conclude very strongly in favour of other Forms of human Composure ; except you will say that those Scripture Prayers, and none else, ought to be used, which you will not pretend, since that would be striking at the Root of extemporary Prayer, as well as prescribed Forms. But if you will grant, that other Prayers than those recorded in Scripture may be lawfully and properly used, then surely those Scripture Prayers, being Forms, is a very good Argument in favour of Forms of human Composition. This is a Consequence no otherwise to be avoided, than by shewing that tho' the Scriptures in general were written for our Example, yet this Case in particular ought not to be drawn into Precedent.—

*The Doctor, it seems(b), upon reviewing Eccl. v. 2 will find it either quite foreign to his Purpose, or directly against him. How so? his Purpose is to shew the Lawfulness and Expediency of Forms of Prayer, in Opposition to ex-*  
temporary

temporary Prayer; and could any thing be more apposite than Solomon's Advice, *Be not rash with thy Mouth, and let not thy Heart be hasty to utter any thing before God? &c.* This at least is a Testimony directly in the Teeth of extemporary Prayer. Yes, say you, *but it proves at the same time that it was both lawful and customary to pray without a prescribed Form.* Now would ever any Man, who blames another for absurd and inconclusive Arguments, be seen to argue in this Manner? The Doctor is establishing the Lawfulness and Expediency of Forms of Prayer as opposed to Extemporany; and you say, the Authority he hath cited, proves also the Lawfulness and Usage of praying without prescribed Forms; now supposing it doth, how is this an Argument *point-blank against him*? To have been so, it must have proved the Unlawfulness and Unfitness of Forms of Prayer, which you will not pretend. Besides, I cannot see that this Text necessarily implies, that it was both *lawful and customary to pray without a Form.* The most you can infer from it is, that there might be some amongst the *Jews then*, as there are amongst *Christians now*, who affected extemporary Prayers; but how this is a Proof of its being lawful, I cannot conceive. However, if the Practice of a few is by you thought a sufficient Argument in favour of *extemporary* Prayer; then surely general Usage, according to your own Way of Reasoning, is a much better Argument in favour of praying by *Forms.*

Neither



Neither, say you (i), is he [the Doctor] more happy in his Quotation from the Apocryphal Book of *Wisdom*; *Before thou prayest, prepare thyself, and be not as one that tempteth the Lord*. Indeed he was so happy in the *other*, that he stands in need of no Aid or Assistance from *this*; and yet *this* is no less favourable to his Purpose than the *other*, even according to your Interpretation of it; viz. *That a Man who is about to pray, ought first to consider what he is going to pray for, as to the Fitness of its being requested, and the most proper Expressions to be used on the Occasion*. And doth not this determine in Favour of precomposed Prayer, and of prescribed Forms? Every must one think so, who thinks Premeditation best preserves Propriety, and that the Wisdom of the Church is better able to judge both of the Fitness of the Requests and Propriety of the Language of publick Prayer, than a private Minister. But whatever this Text may do to Forms prescribed, it flies full in the Face of extemporary Prayer, in which there's no Preparation at all; and was it only brought by the Doctor for that very Purpose, he is not so unhappy as you imagine in the Choice of his second Quotation.

Neither are the ancient Forms, used under the Law of *Moses*, quoted by the Doctor with less Discernment. You ask (k), *what is to be inferred from such Forms? not that because God has a Right to injoin the use of set and prescribed Forms, that therefore Men have the same Right*. No, but this he may reasonably infer, that God's appoint-

appointing the Use of Set Forms *then*, is a good Reason for our Imitation *now*. Yes, say you, *if the Forms now prescribed, were composed by Persons infallible. But how can such as acknowledge themselves destitute of this necessary Qualification, pretend to an Authority to dictate to their Christian Brethren the Forms of Prayer in which they are to address their heavenly Father?* As well might you ask how Persons wanting this necessary Qualification can pretend to make Laws for the better Government of Society. But this is deviating from the Point now under Consideration, which is not the Power or Authority of the Church, but the Lawfulness and Expediency of Liturgies; not whether set Forms ought authoritatively to be enjoined, but whether they may be lawfully and fitly used. Your Reasoning about Church Power, was it seasonable, is extremely weak and absurd, but, under the present State of Toleration, very ill-timed and unbecoming.

The Doctor observes (1), ‘ that there were  
 ‘ never any Christians who questioned and op-  
 ‘ posed the use of set Forms of Prayer, till a  
 ‘ Century or two ago. The universal Practice  
 ‘ of the Church from the earliest Ages, which  
 ‘ is the best Interpreter of Scripture, hath con-  
 ‘ stantly favoured it.’

To this you answer, *I know of none that think it unlawful to use a prescribed Form in the Congregation; but what would the Doctor infer*

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from

*from that?* If you mean, you know of none who oppose or question prescribed Forms of *human Composure*, the Doctor will infer, that you thereby give up the Thing contended for. If you mean only prescribed *Scripture Forms*, he must infer, that you are much given to Equivocation, and very subject to forget your *Greek Motto*; as also, where you ask, (1) *Would he insist that the Forms prescribed to be used in the South of our Island, are such as ought not to be objected to, or that Christians are obliged to use none but set Forms in publick Worship, or that they always from the Beginning of Christianity used such and no other? Would he argue from the Lawfulness of set Forms in general, to the Goodness or Propriety of our established Forms in particular?* Would any Man, who pretends to be a fair Reasoner, draw such Consequences from the Doctor's insisting upon the ancient and general Usage of set Forms of Prayer? Is then ancient and general Usage an improper Argument in favour of set Forms of Prayer, unless it can be proved that such set Forms are absolutely perfect, or that the Rule was so universal, that there were no Exceptions to it? Was ever any thing so weak and trifling? If the ancient and general Usage of the Church is, as the Doctor justly observes, the best Interpreter of Scripture, and if such ancient and general Usage runs in favour of set Forms of Prayer, surely the Doctor is right in his Reasoning, and your Inferences are most ridiculous.

But

(1) Ibid.



But how could it possibly enter into your Head, that the Doctor meant to argue from the Lawfulness of set Forms in general, to the Goodness and Propriety of our established Forms in particular? Did not you know that his professed Design was to prove, first, The Lawfulness and Expediency of set Forms of Prayer in general, and secondly, The Excellency of our own Form in particular, and that he fairly pursued the Method proposed, and set forth the Excellency of our Liturgy under a distinct Head of Discourse; set it forth, not as necessarily flowing from the Lawfulness of set Forms in general (for that is one of the wild Conclusions you have through your whole Book very liberally drawn from him) but as founded upon such Reasons as you have not so much as attempted to answer?

But you go on, (*m*) *He [the Doctor] will readily allow, that Forms of Prayer may be unjustifiable, such as those of the Papists to Saints and Angels; and is there not a Possibility that Prayers composed in England may from the Matter of their Composition be such as cannot be used with a good Conscience?* Yes. And you will allow that extemporary Prayer may be full of Absurdities and Tautologies, and that Prayers uttered in England may for want of Composition be such as cannot be heard consistently with Decency of Countenance. But what then? Does it follow that all Forms of Prayer are

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there-

therefore unjustifiable, and all extemporary Prayers absurd? But is it not strange that you, who was just now against concluding from Generals in Favour of Particulars, should here infer from Particulars to the Prejudice of Generals? What frequent Occasions do you give me to re-mind you of your *Greek Motto*? No: But you lay your Finger upon Particulars, (n) and *appeal to the Doctor, whether he doth not know a Church which hath near Forty Articles, which must be subscribed to by all that would have Institution and Induction, in which Number the Doctrinal Articles are absolutely Predestinarian?* If the Doctor did not look upon such a Writer as unworthy his Regard, I dare say his excessive Modesty would not hinder him from telling you, that you shew an excessive want of that and another Virtue, when you suggest so notorious a Falshood, as that all the doctrinal Articles of our Church are absolutely Predestinarian. (o) *Upon a moderate Computation, say you, does one Clergyman in fifty believe these Doctrines? With what Integrity then do these Divines subscribe them?* A civil Question truly! Is one Clergyman in fifty honest? Or if he is, are not the other forty-nine a Pack of Hypocrites? But to your Question, I answer, that not one Clergyman in fifty, as I apprehend, does believe the Doctrine of absolute Predestination, nor one in one hundred, that such Doctrine is contained in the Articles of

(n) Ibid.

of our Church. To proceed therefore, (o) *And I believe, say you, it hath always been a Misfortune attending Forms of Prayer drawn up for National Churches, that they contain Principles intended to support a particular System of Tenets, in Consequence of which, it must be supposed the Compilers will industriously insert those Principles, and frequently intermix them with the Prayers, which is evidently the Case of the Prayers and Collects of a certain Church.*—

As the Questions asked in the two last Periods shew them to be free, so from the Nonsense of this, one would conclude it to be *extemporary*: For there is no more Sense in it, than if you had said, It is a Misfortune attending Forms of Prayer drawn up for National Churches, that they contain certain Principles intended to support a particular System of Principles; and in consequence of their containing such Principles, it must be supposed the Compilers will industriously insert those Principles. Why, you are resolved, I find, to outdo the Dr. (p) in his *genteel Politeness and Delicacy of Style, and crowd more Ornaments into your Argumentation* than he possibly could into his. I suppose you mean, (for I can but suppose it) that National Forms of Prayer are apt to be made consistent with National Principles or Tenets. And this you think a Misfortune. But hold, Sir, if you pray without Form, do you pray also without Principle? If not, do not you intermix your Principles



ciples with your Prayers? When you have shewed what the Misfortune is in the *one* Case, it will be easy to shew you a much greater in the *other*.

As to the universal Practice of the Church from the earliest Ages, which the Doctor asserts to be in his Favour, you say, (*p*) *No Regard whatsoever ought to be had to the Ages of Antichristian Superstition and Popish Darkness. From which it seems as if the earliest Ages of the Church were Ages of Antichristian Superstition and Popish Darkness. Admirable Doctrine this! And the Reasoning upon it as exquisite. For (as it immediately follows) the Example of Papists for 1000 or 1200 Years back, will be no better a Plea for prescribed Forms of Prayer, than it will be for having publick Prayers in an unknown Tongue. Let us join the Assertion and the Reason together, the better to display the Strength and Beauty of the Argument. No Regard ought to be had to the first or earliest Ages of the Church, Ages of Antichristian Superstition and Popish Darkness, because the Example of Papists for 1000 or 1200 Years back, are no better a Plea for prescribed Forms of Prayer, than for publick Prayers in an unknown Tongue. 'Tis Pity but the Doctor had seen some of your controversial Performances before he published his Sermon, that from them he might have learned to reason less absurdly, and more conclusively. But suppose you meant only*

only that prescribed Forms of Prayer were brought in with Popery 1000 or 1200 Years ago, the Romanists indeed will be thankful to you for allowing them so great Antiquity; but it will not serve your Purpose, Forms of Prayer being still older, and therefore no Popish Institution. Well; but now you bring *Justin Martyr*, who lived in the second Century, to your Assistance. (q) *He tells us, it seems, in his Account of the Worship of those truly primitive Christians, that the Minister prayed as the Mouth of the Congregation, and without a Form.* But why without a Form? Because, say you, his Words are these, *Και ο προεσως ευχας ομοιως και ευχαριστας, οση δυναμις αυτω αναπεμπει, και ολαος επευφημει λεγων το αμην.* Now here you suppose *οση δυναμις αυτω*, which you have translated *according to his Ability*, implies, that the Minister prayed without a Form. But why so? Might not he pray according to his Ability *with* a Form? 'Tis so far from being impossible, that I think it hardly possible for him to have prayed according to his Ability *without* one. He who prays according to his Ability, makes use of the best Means that he can, that his Prayers may be most apt, significant, expressive and regular, which can never be without Care and Skill in the Composition. If either of these are wanting, no Man can be said to pray in the Church, *as the Mouth of the Congregation according to his Abilities*, but according

ing to his Fancy. But further, suppose I would translate *οὐκ ἔστιν αὐτῷ*, *with all his Might*, as I may fairly do, it would seem then as if that Phrase did not mean the express *Ability of the Inventor*, but the *Fervency of the Petitioner*. And *Gregory Nazianzen*, who lived in the 4th Century, and therefore, according to your own *Æra*, was no Popish Father, uses it for the same Purpose; when exhorting the Christians, upon the Death of *Julian*, to sing that Song of Triumph composed by *Moses* for the *Israelites*, upon the Overthrow of the *Egyptians*, he bids them do it *οὐκ ἔστιν αὐτῷ*; and yet that Song was a Form not only to be used on that Occasion, but constantly afterwards in their public Devotions. And you'll please likewise to take Notice, that *Justin Martyr* doth not say that the Minister *conceived and made*, but *lifted up* Prayers and Thanksgivings according to his Ability, or with all his Might; for it comes to the very same Thing, whether it is rendered this Way or that. In like Manner as holy *David* is to be understood, when he saith, as we have translated him, *I will sing unto the Lord with the best Member that I have*. And again, *Sing lustily unto him, and with a good Courage*. But when you was speaking of that Father, why did not you remember another Passage of his upon the same Subject, in which he calls the Devotions of those truly primitive Christians, *Κοινὰς εὐχὰς*, *common Prayers*?  
Why



Why was one to be taken and the other left? Why this Partiality in your Quotations? Or where now was your Ζητω γαρ την αληθειαν? But 'tis plain, however desirous you was that Mr. *Hutchins's* Trustees should understand your Greek Motto, you have but very little Regard to it yourself.——But besides, *Justin Martyr*, whom you quoted so unhappily both for your Cause and your Credit, the same Century produced many able Vouchers for the Use of Liturgies. *Ignatius*, *Irenæus*, *Clement of Alexandria*, *Tertullian*, &c. as the third did *Hypolitus* the Martyr, *Origen*, *Cyprian*, &c. and the fourth, *Arnobius*, *Lactantius*, *Eusebius*, *Athanasius*, *St. Chrysostom*, &c. All which Authorities are more than 1200 Years old, and therefore are worthy some Regard; except you really meant, what your Words seem'd to imply, that *the earliest Ages of the Church were Ages of Ancichristian Superstition and Popish Darkness*.——But from *Antiquity* pass we on to *Reason*.

“ A prescribed Form of Worship, saith the  
 “ Doctor, is not subject to the same Inconveni-  
 “ encies with extemporary Effusions; the great  
 “ Danger of unpremeditated Prayer is, lest it  
 “ should degenerate into a Rhapsody of Absur-  
 “ dities and Enthusiasm.”

To which you answer, that (r) *extemporary and unpremeditated are, with the Doctor, Words synonymous*. And really he is not the only

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Doctor

Doctor who useth them so. What says Dr. Watts to this? Why, according to his Definition “† *Extemporary Prayer is, when we without any Reflection or Meditation before hand, address our selves to God, and speak the Thoughts of our Hearts as fast as we conceive them.*” Thus you see the Doctors, whatever they may do in other Points, in this do not differ; nor however you may choose to dissent from the one, would you, I presume, be willing to disagree with the other. Though it seems pretty clear from this Remark, that you never learn’d of him to pray or to reason. Nor would you have been so very angry with our Doctor for what he said of the Inconveniencies of extemporary Prayer, if you had at the same Time considered what your own hath observ’d on the same Occasion. ‡ “*If, says he, we utterly neglect Preparation, we shall be ready to fall into many Inconveniencies. Sometimes we shall be constrained to make long and indecent Stops in Prayer, not knowing what to say next; at other times we shall be in Danger of saying those Things that are little to the Purpose, and of wandering far from our Subject and Design, which can never be acceptable to God. And sometimes, when the Mind is not regularly furnished, the natural Spirits are put in a Hurry, and we run into a confused, incoherent, and impertinent Rhapsody of Words, whereby both God may be dishonoured,*

† Vide his Treatise on Prayer. ‡ Ibid.

“ honoured, and our own Edification, and the  
 “ Edification of others spoiled.

And now whom have you been accusing of bringing an injurious Charge, as you speak in one Place, a hard and unchristian Charge in another, and of using flagrant Terms of Reproach in a third, against his Christian Brethren? How natural is it for an unskilful Marksman to hit his Friend, whilst he is levelling at his Adversary! Will Dr. *Watts* thank you for this Compliment? Or must he not conclude you have a Zeal, but not according to Knowledge, in rudely censuring the whole Body of the established Clergy, as giving themselves *Airs*, only for entertaining the same Notion with one of the most eminent of your own, touching the Inconveniencies of extemporary Prayer?

But if there should be nothing unbecoming and absurd in extemporary Prayer (says Dr. *Newton*, and which was such a Relaxation of his Rigour, as was in a fair Way of making you Friends again, had he not immediately afterwards labour'd to multiply Difficulties on your Side, by subjoining) ‘ Yet the Audience  
 ‘ must first endeavour to understand the Words,  
 ‘ and then they must weigh and consider the  
 ‘ Meaning of them; and then they must deliberate whether such Requests are proper for Persons in their Condition, before they can lawfully  
 ‘ join in them.’ (s) Here let it be particularly observed, say you, is one Act of the Mind converted

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verted



verted into three, for the Sake of loading the Method of praying without a prescribed Form with insuperable Difficulties. But as Dr. Watts's Book of Prayer before, so his Book of Logicks now may be able to convince you, that you are again angry without a Cause, and not quite so complaisant to Dr. Newton as might have been expected from his late *Relaxation* or Indulgence. This Book, I doubt not, will tell you, that to understand Words or Terms simply or uncompounded, to understand them again when form'd into Sentences, and to judge of the Truth and Propriety of such Sentences, are three successive Acts of the Mind. If this therefore is an *insuperable Difficulty* attending extemporary Prayer, it is as strong a Reason as can be assigned for the Necessity and Expediency of praying by a set or prescribed Form.—Yes. But now let you but crowd all these three several Acts of the Mind into one, and the Difficulty vanishes in an Instant. (t) And you appeal to any Man of common Sense, whether any greater Space is required for understanding, weighing, and considering, and deliberating on the Meaning and Propriety of the Expressions of the Minister in Prayer, than those natural and very short Pauses which are necessary to be made betwixt the End of one Sentence and the Beginning of another. To which I answer, that to Judges equally forward and rash with your self, a very short Pause is sufficient; but to others more modest and cautious, a larger Space is requisite.

quisite. Some Speakers, as Dr. *Watts* observed, may run into a *confused, incoherent, and impertinent Rhapsody of Words*; and some Hearers may be unhappy in Slowness of Apprehension: In both which Cases more Time for Judgment is necessary, than you are willing to allow. The latter of these Misfortunes, I am afraid, is my own, (for I must not suspect you want Clearness and Perspicuity) since I do assure you there are many Passages in your Book now before me, which I found it very difficult to understand, and which, however plain and demonstrative to others, to me, after all my pausing and deliberating, appear either void of Meaning, or full of Impertinence.— Well, but if so much Time for understanding, and deliberating on the Meaning of the Expressions of the Minister in Prayer is necessary, you ask, (u) *Whether by Parity of Reason, according to this Way of arguing, the Doctor ought not to print every one of his Sermons before he preaches them?* Yes, if it is necessary that his Hearers should have as clear and perfect a Knowledge of his Instructions to them, as of their Addresses to God; not otherwise. But Prayer and Preaching can with no sort of Propriety be drawn into Parallel. If I do not understand the Preacher, so far am I disappointed my self; but if I pray without understanding, I affront my Maker, and *am as one that mocketh or tempteth the Lord.*

*But*

(u) Ibid.

(x) *But what gives, you say, an incontestable Attestation to the Lawfulness of Praying without a prescribed Form, is, that we have several Prayers of considerable length recorded in Scripture, which were not read to the People, neither had the People any Copies to read.* Was ever such a Reasoner? The Doctor is proving the Lawfulness and Expediency of prescribed Forms of Prayer, and you his mighty Adversary produce *an incontestable Attestation of the Lawfulness of praying without a Form.* But thus indeed you frequently change the Argument, tho' the Manner of your Argumentation is always the same. But I know you'll say this is a Part of the Question in Dispute, (y) *since the Doctor would persuade you that the only possible Method for the People to join in Prayer, is their having Copies to read.* I'm sure if he ever did endeavour to persuade you to this, it is not in the Discourse which hath given you such Offence. He hath indeed been bold enough to assert, that the Congregation cannot properly join in Petitions they do not understand; but he hath no where said that they cannot properly understand without Copies. So that there was no Occasion for your so serious a Concern for those that cannot read. But you may be justly concern'd that, whilst you are opposing set Forms of Prayer, you have pointed out a farther Argument in their Favour, which is, that they who cannot read, may, by the repeated and constant Use of the same



same Form, become better Judges of it's Fitness and Propriety, than they who *can*, of extemporary Effusions. Besides, the Prayers you speak of, *viz.* those of *Solomon*, *Ezra*, and *Nehemiah*, were not *extemporary*, but *compos'd*, and therefore are by no Means for your Purpose. Or even supposing them to be extemporary, they were occasional and special, and therefore to be no Rule for our daily or ordinary Devotions. Neither was it indeed for theirs, since in their Common Prayer, or Publick Worship, the *Jews* made use of prescribed Forms.

Having shew'd the Inconveniencies of extemporary Prayer, the Doctor proceeds to shew the Usefulness of Forms. And his first Argument is, 'that a precompos'd Form is so far from  
' obstructing or quenching our Devotion, as is  
' pretended, that it rather assists and inflames  
' it; the Matter and the Words are both pre-  
' par'd to our Hands; we know before what  
' is to follow, that we may lawfully join in it,  
' and no other Attention is required but to raise  
' our Affections."

(z) *This Sentence, you say, comes in but very oddly in this Place.* But however, since, as you a little after observe, 'tis in Effect a Confutation of himself, I hope you will excuse its odd Manner, for its good Services. It is very happy for you, that the Doctor hath been so civil as to confute himself; such an Adversary, and

no

no other, it becomes you always to engage with. But let us see how it is he hath done you this singular Favour. (a) *The Objectors to Forms of Prayer, as they tend to damp and deaden Devotion, lay the Strength of their Objection in their being so well known, and so commonly repeated. And therefore the Doctor, in saying We know before what is to follow, that we may lawfully join in it, and no other Attention is required but to raise our Affections, hath confuted himself.* And is this all? I'm afraid we have been too early in our Gratitude, and that the Doctor hath not been so generous as was imagined. He thought, the better we are acquainted with our Petitions, we might offer them with the greater Fervency. You think, *the knowing them too well, damps and deadens our Zeal.* I took you before for a Protestant Dissenter, but now, from your making Ignorance such a Help to Devotion, you should seem to belong to that Church, whose *Antichristian Usurpations* you elsewhere very justly condemn. But now for your Illustration of this Doctrine. *Suppose a Man was never to hear above one or two Sermons from his Minister, how excellent soever he might think them the first and second Hearing, it would become tedious to hear them five hundred Times each, &c.* And yet an extemporary Sermon, only once heard, may happen to be more tiresome to the Ear, and grievous to the Heart, than

(a) Ibid.

han a regular well-composed Discourse five hundred Times repeated. I agree with you, that 'tis the universal Case of Mankind to love Variety. But 'tis also the universal Case of Mankind not always to love what is best for them; but to consult their Curiosity rather than their Welfare, as well in their spiritual as bodily Food. They who object to Forms of Prayer, that they tend to damp and deaden Devotion, do not well consider wherein the true Spirit of Devotion consists, which is, in a due Sense of our Wants, and a lively Faith in God's Mercy. From these must arise the Fervency of the Petitioner, and not from a studied Variety of Petitions. If the Begger varies the Manner of his Supplications, it is not that they may thereby make the deeper Impression upon himself, or add to the Vigour of his Zeal, or heighten his Importunity; but the more powerfully to work upon the Minds of others, to awake their Compassion and excite their Charity. But we can have no such Motive for varying our Prayers to God; and with regard to our selves, the Instance before given may shew us, that such Alteration is altogether unnecessary; and that the constant Sense or Apprehension of the same daily Wants and Necessities, will ever inspire us with proper Ardor or Fervency in the same daily Form of Prayer. In short, if Forms of Prayer by constant Use grow flat and insipid, the Fault lies not in the Repetition of the Form, but in the Indisposition of



the Heart; and where this is indisposed, Devotion must be languid, either ~~with~~ a Form or without one. But where the Heart is rightly prepared, a Form assists and inflames our Devotion, as the Doctor observes, and for the Reason by him assigned: ‘ Because the Matter and  
 ‘ the Words being both prepared to our Hands,  
 ‘ no other Attention is required but to raise our  
 ‘ Affections.’ Or (as another judicious Writer hath it) ‘ We are then at leisure to improve the  
 ‘ good Motions of the Spirit; having no more  
 ‘ to do, but to join our Souls and Affections to  
 ‘ every Petition, and follow them up to Heaven in most passionate and zealous Wishes  
 ‘ that God would grant them. (b) But yet, you say, *You cannot conceive that a Person supposed to be highly affected at the first and second Hearing of a Discourse, could by any possible Endeavour ever keep up his Attention after many Times hearing it, or be affected in any proportionable Degree as he was at first.* If you will be so fond of running the absurd Parallel betwixt Prayer and Preaching, I would ask you, whether you cannot by any possible Endeavours keep up your Attention upon hearing or repeating the Lord’s Prayer, which I doubt not you have many times heard and repeated, or be affected with it in some proportionable Degree to what you was at first? if you can, where is your Argument? if you cannot, where is your Piety?—But let us proceed to your next Remark. The

The Doctor asks, Whether the Spirit of the Congregation be not equally stinted, whether the Minister pray in extemporary, or in a composed regular Form? To which you readily answer (c) *no, in no Degree of Comparison.* And so do I. But I doubt we shall not long agree so well together. You think the Spirit of the Congregation more stinted in *set Forms*, but I in *extemporary Prayer*. It will here be necessary to state the true Meaning of the Phrase, *stinting the Spirit*. If by this is meant a Confinement to a certain Set of Words, then indeed, with regard to the Congregation, the Spirit is equally stinted in the one Case as in the other, since in both they are confined to the Words of others, and are not at Liberty to conceive for themselves. If by *stinting the Spirit* is meant, as the Doctor hath expressed it, a damping or quenching of Devotion, then the Spirit of the Congregation is abundantly more stinted in extemporary Prayer, for the Reason also by him given, *viz.* ‘that they must first endeavour  
 ‘ to understand the Words, then they must  
 ‘ weigh and consider the Meaning of them,  
 ‘ and then they must deliberate whether such  
 ‘ Requests are proper for Persons in their Con-  
 ‘ dition.’ And these I will yet presume to call *three* Acts of the Mind, notwithstanding your learned Confutation of that Opinion. But was it only *one*, it would still be a Clog upon Devotion, and abate the Spirit and Fervency of

Prayer: It being impossible, where Deliberation is necessary, that the Affection can have the same free Scope, as where the Judgment is already settled.— But now you suggest, (*d*) *the Spirit of the Congregation is stinted, if the Minister is not at Liberty to intersperse any Petitions, according to the infinite Variety of Circumstances, to which that part of the Church and the World is incident; and that this is a reasonable Expectation in the People, which being not answered, the most probable Effect in every Mind turned to Reflection and Devotion would be, rather to lament the general vague and indeterminate Petitions that are offered, instead of such as they might conceive would be incomparably more suitable, affecting, and interesting. If you mean by that part of the Church, &c. the whole Congregation, or Community collectively, Forms of Prayer may be, and are often occasional, as well as extemporary; if you mean individually, then I'm afraid they are like to sorrow as Men without Hope, it being impossible for the Minister to accommodate Publick Prayer to their perpetually altering Circumstances.*—— You speak of the Doctor's Question, is not the Spirit of the Congregation equally stinted in extemporary, as in Forms of Prayer, as a *very extraordinary one*. But believe me, it is no new Start of his own Fancy, but is as old as the Objection to Forms of Prayer, *their stinting of the Spirit*; and such  
a full



a full and solid Confutation of it, as must for ever have put it to Silence, were there not always some Persons in the World who are more studious of having the *last Word*, than of producing the *best Argument*.

Nor is the Doctor's next Question less to the Purpose: ' And which is more fit and proper ' for the People, to receive a Form of Prayer ' from the Wisdom and Authority of the ' whole Church, or to depend upon the Discretion of every single Minister?' You say, (d) *you know of no Wisdom nor Authority of the whole Church*. The Word *Authority* seems to have alarmed you strangely; and indeed, it is a very obnoxious Word to such as *are presumptuous, self-will'd, despise Dominion, and speak Evil of Dignities*. But had you understood it in the same Sense the Doctor used it in this Place, you might probably have preserved more Temper and Decency. The Doctor here, by *the Authority of the Church*, never intended to insist upon *Church Power*, which hath given so much Offence. But there is likewise an *Authority of Wisdom*, which all except the Obstinate and Conceited ever acknowledged. This Wisdom indeed, and the Authority flowing from it, you can by no Means allow to the *Church*; but I hope you will be more complaisant to the *Senate*. I will therefore ask you, whether it is not more fit and proper for the People

ple to receive Laws from the Wisdom of Parliament, than to depend upon the Discretion of every single Member? But as little Wisdom as you may think there is in the Church, or however willing you may be to make *it* an Exception to all collective Bodies, yet I doubt not you will grant, that could its Rulers accomodate Forms of Prayer *to the perpetually altering Circumstances of the People*, then the united Abilities of such Rulers ought rather to be relied on, than the Discretion of every single Minister. But is the *Wisdom of the Senate* equal to this? can they accomodate their Laws to such an infinite Variety of Circumstances? or is it left to the Prudence of every private Member to supply that Defect, by framing By-Laws of his own, which he may conceive *more suitable or interesting* to the Place he represents? No; this is an Indulgence never to be allowed in the one Case, though it is in the other; and I hope ever will be, for the Sake of those more modest and moderate Dissenters, who would be ashamed to make such an unworthy Return to the Church, for this Abridgment of its *Power*, as to fly in the Face of its *Wisdom*.—— Your Remark upon those two Articles of our Church, in one of which is expressed its Power of decreeing Rites and Ceremonies, &c. and in the other of which, you say, is implied the Right of private Judgment, is not more rude than ridiculous. The Repugnancy you suppose betwixt them, having no other Foundation than this, that

that all Laws for the better Ordering and Government of the Church as a religious Society, are inconsistent with the Right of private Judgment. Well, but granting, you will say, that meer matter of Discipline may be consistent with private Judgment, yet how will you reconcile the Church's Authority in Controversies of Faith, to that private Right? I answer, that the Authority here spoken of, may signify no more than the *Authority of Wisdom*, according to the Distinction before made, the same we ascribe to the Royal Society in Questions of Natural Philosophy; or suppose it to go higher, and besides the Influence it ought to have upon ingenuous Minds, we are to understand by it the Power of determining *Controversies of Faith*, or, which is all that is meant by it, the Power of settling the true Interpretation of Scripture, which is the Rule of Faith; in neither of these Senses is such Authority inconsistent with private Judgment, unless private Judgment consists not in the free and undisturbed Enjoyment of private Opinion, but in an unlimited Freedom of disturbing the Peace of the Church with perpetual Wranglings and Disputes, which cannot possibly be prevented, without fixing the definitive Sentence somewhere; and where so properly as in the Church? But whatever Authority the Church may claim in her Articles, it's certain she hath not exerted it in her Administration; and therefore your so frequent Outcries  
and



and Invectives against Church Power, are unmanerly, unreasonable, and ungrateful.

The Doctor's next Argument in favour of a precomposed Form of Prayer, is, 'that it is more for the Honour of Almighty God, expresses more Reverence and Devotion, preserves greater Propriety and Decency of Language, and in short, surpasses extemporary Prayer, as much as sound Piety and Religion excels the Freaks and Rants of Fanaticism and Enthusiasm.'

This is most intolerable, and hath put you quite out of all Patience. *Freaks, Rants, Fanaticism, Enthusiasm, all in one Piece of a Sentence!* I tremble for the Doctor, and should look upon him as quite lost and ruined, had I not some Hopes that upon reconsidering another Sentence of Dr. Watts's before taken Notice of, *viz. confused, incoherent, impertinent Rhapsody*, you may think proper to spare the *one* for the Sake of the *other*. But to the Question, which being, as you observe, *whether praying by prescribed Forms, or without, is most likely to excite Devotion, good Reasoning, and not dogmatical Assertion and contumelious Railing* (nor let me add, *pert and foolish Menacing*) *will serve the Turn*. On which side the Reasoning and on which the Railing hath lain, I must now appeal to every candid, unprejudiced Reader. But since Dr. Newton's Reasoning doth not suit you, since his *Stile is too genteel, polite, and delicate, and his Argumentation too much crowded with Ornaments for your Taste*, I will shew you how the learned Dr.

Dr. *Prideaux* reasons upon this Point: As you have borrowed one Quotation from that *Ornament of our Church*, which you think directly answers your Purpose, give me Leave to borrow another from him, which I think much more favourable to mine. Speaking of the set Forms of Devotion amongst the *Jews* (eighteen of whose Prayers he hath translated from the *Jewish* Liturgies) and arguing from them, and from our Saviour's joining in them, in favour of our own, or at least in Vindication of the Use of set Forms in general; he adds, (i) ' the Truth is, ' whether there be a Form, or no Form; whether that Form be elegantly or meanly composed, nothing of this availeth to the recommending of our Prayers unto God. It is the true and sincere Devotion of the Heart only, that can make them acceptable unto him: For it is this only that gives Life and Vigour, and true Acceptance to all our religious Addresses to him. Without this, how elegant and moving soever the Prayer may be composed, and with how much seeming Fervour and Zeal soever it may be pour'd out, all is as dead Matter and of no Validity in the Presence of our God. But if we bring this with us to his Worship, any Form of Prayer, *provided it be of sound Words*, may be sufficient to make us and our Worship acceptable unto him, and obtain Mercy, Peace, and Pardon from him. For it is not the Fineness of Speech, or the Elegancy of Expression,

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(i) *Prideaux's Connexion*, vol. I. P. 378 & 379. 6 Ed. 8vo.

‘ but the Sincerity of the Mind, and the true  
 ‘ Devotion of the Heart only, that God regards  
 ‘ in all our Prayers, which we offer up unto  
 ‘ him. It is true, a new Jingle of Words,  
 ‘ and a fervent Delivery of them by the Mi-  
 ‘ nister in Prayer, may have some Effect upon  
 ‘ the Auditors, and often raise in such of them  
 ‘ as are affected this Way, a Devotion which  
 ‘ otherwise they would not have. But this  
 ‘ being wholly artificial, which all drops again  
 ‘ as soon as the Engine is remov’d that rais’d  
 ‘ it; it is none of that true, habitual Devoti-  
 ‘ on, which can alone render us acceptable un-  
 ‘ to our God, in any of our Addresses unto him.  
 ‘ This we ought to bring with us, when ever  
 ‘ we come into the House of God to worship  
 ‘ him, and with this, in *any Form which is of*  
 ‘ *sound Words*, we may pray acceptably to  
 ‘ him, and none can ever do so without it.  
 ‘ But whether any Form of such *sound Words*  
 ‘ can be well preserved in those extemporary  
 ‘ Effusions of Prayer which some delight in,  
 ‘ whether this doth not often lead them into  
 ‘ indecent, and sometimes into *blasphemous Ex-*  
 ‘ *pressions*, to the great Dishonour of God, and  
 ‘ the Damage of Religion, it behoves them who  
 ‘ are for this Way seriously to consider.’

And now, Sir, how do you like this Doctor’s  
 Style and Argumentation? I’m afraid you will  
 think the one too *polite and delicate*, and the  
 other too much *crowded with Ornaments*. —But  
 you



you go on: (k) *The Propriety of the Language in which the Liturgy is compos'd, depended upon the Capacity of those who drew it up, &c. The Liturgy?* Whither are you got now? Why I thought the Question betwixt Dr. *Newton* and you had been the Fitness and Propriety of prescribed Forms in general, whether praying by prescribed Forms or without, is most likely to excite Devotion? And this and no other is the present Point in Issue. The Doctor asserts, that 'a precomposed Form is more for the Honour of God, expresseth more Reverence and Devotion, and preserves greater Propriety and Decency of Language than extemporary Prayer.' He speaks not here of *this* Liturgy or *that*, but of a precompos'd Form as such. By what Method of Reasoning then do you, in Answer to his Assertion of the Propriety of the Language of *Liturgies in general*, now enter into a Discourse about the Impropriety of the *English Liturgy in particular*? For let that be ever so improper, 'tis no Argument against the general Use of Liturgies, which you your self rightly observ'd to be the Question betwixt you. That Question therefore you must now be suppos'd to give up, tho' very abruptly, and to have taken up a new one, which is, that tho' Forms in themselves may best preserve Propriety and Decency of Language, yet that is not the Case of the Form made use of by our Church. And the Rea-

son you give for it is, (1) *That there are in it many old, obsolete Words, unintelligible to the common People, or, which is altogether as bad, some of the old Words are still used, but in a very different and sometimes direct contrary Signification; in so much that it would not be difficult to compose a Prayer or a Discourse of those kind of Words out of the Liturgy, which if heard by the Learned, would be very difficultly understood, and to the Vulgar would be as unintelligible as the Latin Service to the vulgar Papists.* That I verily believe may be done, even without the Assistance of old, obsolete Words. Nay I'm thoroughly persuaded, from several Specimens given, that you yourself can with great Facility write unintelligibly, either to the Vulgar, or to the Learned, without using any but the easiest and most familiar Words in the *English* Language. But others of a less puzzling Genius may be obliged to a Collection of Obsoletes to help them out.— But then they must be fetch'd from another Magazine than that from which your's was borrow'd; from the Writings of *Chaucer*, and not from the Psalms of *David*. Or if from *David*, they must be pick'd up by a more judicious Collector; for a Writer who hath any Meaning, would not find it so easy to hide it under the Terms you have chosen and inserted in your elaborate Appendix, which taken singly, are, in my Opinion, as well understood by the People, as those you have substituted in their Place :

Place : Or if not in themselves, yet very easy and intelligible as they stand connected with others : Or again, should this be insufficient, the frequent Paraphrases *of*, or Discourses *upon* such Portions of Scripture in which those Words are contain'd, cannot but familiarize them to the meanest Capacities. — But let them be ever so plain and intelligible, they are still offensive to you for their Antiquity. And you cannot bear that *(m)* *publick Prayers should be continued in the uncouth Lowness, or obsolete Mustiness of two hundred Years.* But here I must put you in Mind how much you differ from your favourite Author the learned Dr. *Prideaux*, who, as you may remember, laid no Stress upon *Elegancy or Politeness of Stile*, but *Soundness of Words*. And believe me, the Words which you object to, tho' *old*, are much *sounder* and more expressive than some of modern Date, and much better accommodated to vulgar Understandings. 'Tis this *Form of sound Words* which Dr. *Newton* suggests is best preserved by the Use of Liturgies. For by Propriety and Decency of Language he means no more than that Strength and Simplicity which he ascribes to our own, when he says, ' The Language is ' so plain as to be level to the Capacities of the ' Meanest, and yet the Sense so noble as to ' raise the Conceptions of the Greatest. It is further to be observed, that in other Parts of the Scriptures, according to the most modern

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Translation of them, there are Words as old and obsolete as those you have glean'd up from the Psalms of *David*. When therefore you read the Scriptures in your publick Assemblies, I would ask you, whether you read them, as they are, *in their uncouth Lowness or obsolete Mustiness*, or alter the Diction, modernize the Phrase, and refine upon the Language? Every Reader varying the Dress, as best suits his own Taste or Humour? If not, (which I apprehend is the Case) with what Modesty can you object to our Way of Worship an Impropriety, if it is one, which is equally chargeable upon your own?

The Story you quote from Dr. *Prideaux*, of the *Magians* publick Prayers continuing still in the *Persic* Language (their vulgar Tongue when first compos'd, but now unknown to the common People) would be applicable to your Purpose, was our Liturgy still continued down to us in the old *Saxon* Language, or even in the *English* spoken by our Ancestors 3 or 400 Years ago; but, as Matters now stand, can do you no Service. The great and fruitless Pains you have been at in ransacking for *old, musty, unintelligible Words*, and at last compiling your ingenious Vocabulary out of the *Psalms*, and even there fixing upon Words so generally understood, is a strong Proof that the present State of our Liturgy is widely different from that of the *Magians*; and that we are yet very remote

remote from the Danger of offering our public Prayers in a lost or forgotten Language. What Alteration ours may undergo in 3 or 400 Years to come is uncertain; but we have good Reason to hope, that as our *Language* changes, our *Liturgy* will be accommodated to it, and that the *Stiffness of Humour* against which Dr. *Prideaux* hath entered his Caveat, will not prevent any necessary Alterations, if *no Incendiaries* would labour to destroy that good Temper and Moderation which at present subsists betwixt those who approve of Liturgies, and those who do not. 'Tis out of a true Desire that it may still continue and increase, that I forbear to recriminate, and to throw that Disgrace upon *your* Manner of Praying, which you in vain attempted upon *ours*, by setting forth a Catalogue not of *old, obsolete, uncouth, musty Words*, but of those *confus'd, incoherent, impertinent Rhapsodies*, which one of the *greatest Ornaments* of those religious Societies which oppose set Forms, complains to have sometimes flow'd from extemporary Prayer.

Dr. *Newton's* next Argument in favour of a prescribed Form is, ' That such a Form is  
' better not only for the People, but for the  
' Ministers too; for as it prevents any vain Ostentation of their Talents in the more Learned, so it supplies the more Ignorant with  
' what perhaps they could ill compose of  
' themselves.'

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(n) *As to vain Ostentation*, say you, 'tis *what no good Man will be guilty of*. But the Doctor is speaking of *learned Men*, and such are very subject to be vain. And why not *good Men*? Are they then *impeccable*? Are they out of the Reach of Temptation? *St. Paul*, you will allow, was a good Man, and yet he pray'd for a Thorn in the Flesh to keep down his spiritual Pride. Doubtless the best Men may deviate into Error, as the worst Reasoners into Sense. But believe me, Sir, I do not mean to charge you with any such Deviations; for, as far as I have seen of your Writings, you are quite uniform, and preserve a regular Confusion from the Beginning to the End.—Well: (o) *But are not Men of superior Abilities cramp'd and fetter'd by being ty'd down to old obsolete Forms*? Why this is a Mortification indeed: But if it prevents vain Ostentation, no good Man will be sorry for that. (p) *Would their superior Abilities be of no Advantage towards exciting the Devotions and animating the Petitions of Christians*? Pray, Sir, keep a little closer. From your smart Reprehension of the Doctor at first setting out, for his *inconclusive* Arguments, I expected to have found you a most *chaste and correct Reasoner*, but I never met with one so loose and vagrant. The Point now is not whether it be of any, and what, Advantage to others, that the Minister should have the free Exercise of his superior Abilities in Prayer; but whe-



whether it is not better for the *Minister himself* to be confin'd to a Form, as it prevents the vain Ostentation of his Talents? And as to the People, tho' here it is foreign to the Point, I'm firmly perswaded, that their true and real and rational Devotions in common or publick Prayer are more animated by a well-ordered set Form, than by the extemporary Addresses of private Ministers, or even by their studied Compositions. And for that plain Reason before given, amongst others, *viz.* That many wise Heads are better than one. Or, to speak in *Solomon's* Words, because *in a Multitude of Counsellors there is Safety*. But now you return to your old Game, of concluding or inferring from praying to preaching, and say, *(q) May we not as well argue that they [the superior Abilities of some Ministers] are not useful, or perhaps that they are dangerous [as tending to vain Ostentation] in Sermons, &c. And so there must be no other Preaching as well as Praying, but by Form, that is, by Homilies?* I answer, that the true or material Question, as to Prayer, being not whether the superior Abilities of *some* Ministers may not be useful without a prescribed Form, but whether a prescribed Form is not better *upon the Whole*; it is no sort of doubt with me but Preaching also by Form, as you speak, or by Homilies, would be so too. Nor can it well be doubted by any, but that Sermons composed by the joint Skill and Labour of a

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select Number of the ablest Divines, to be deliver'd in their Courses throughout all the Congregations in *England*, would be more useful to the People in general, than the several Discourses, whether extemporary, or compos'd, of private Ministers. But then you will ask, why therefore is not this Method pursued in *Preaching* as well as in *Prayer*? Now, tho' many are the Reasons for making a Difference, this alone is sufficient, that such Confinement in *Preaching* would be a great Discouragement to Learning, not more the Ornament than Defence of Religion, and thereby give Heresy and Infidelity dangerous Advantages. For however proper Arguments might be borrow'd from Books already written, for the Confutation of all present or future Adversaries to Christianity, yet it is further necessary that there be always a Body of Men skillful to make use of them: the Weapons would do but little Service, if we knew not how to wield them. But without Learning, such Knowledge could not be; and Learning amongst the Clergy would soon be at as low an Ebb as you suppose it to have been at the Time of the Reformation, was *Preaching* to be so confin'd. But now, that Confinement in *Prayer* is not attended with the same Danger or Inconveniency, is evident from the State of the Church, not only at present, but for at least a Century past, which hath been distinguished by such Numbers of  
great

great and celebrated Characters, and in which the Clergy in general have made so good a Figure in Literature, notwithstanding their being confin'd to Liturgies. — And then as to *vain Ostentation of Talents, which you suppose equally dangerous in Preaching as in Praying, and thence conclude for the Expediency of Homilies as well as Liturgies*; I answer, that certain it is, there is Danger of Ostentation accompanying great Abilities, in whatever Business they are employ'd, but more especially in that of extemporary Prayer. When Men happen to be furnish'd with a quick Invention, and a happy Fluency of Speech, they are too apt in Prayer to mistake these natural Endowments for *supernatural* Gifts, and in Confidence of them to *rush into Prayer*, as Dr. Watts very well expresseth it; or according to the Son of *Sirach* before quoted, *without preparing themselves*, and thereby *are as such as tempt the Lord*, i. e. as you put it, such as despise or offend God: But I apprehend your Note or Explanation hurts the Text, and takes away much of its Force and Energy. And therefore I would rather chuse to say, as such who neglecting the natural Helps to Prayer, *viz.* Study and Premeditation, rely upon the supernatural Assistances of the Spirit. And 'tis in this Sense our blessed Saviour himself makes use of this Phrase, when he says to *Satan*, upon his requiring him to cast himself down from the Pin-



nacle of the Temple, suggesting his miraculous Preservation in Case he was what he pretended to be. (r) *Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.* So that here again your arguing from praying by Forms, to preaching by Homilies, is weak and trifling.

\* *The Distinction made by the Doctor betwixt the more learned and more ignorant Ministers, it seems, put you in Mind of the State of Things in those Times when the Liturgy and Homilies were compiled.* But it appears to me that this Distinction hath not only refreshed your Memory, but assisted your Fancy. You have thence struck out a new Thought, (s) *That the Use of Homilies was instituted in Condescension to the prevailing Ignorance that overspread the Land, for want of a sufficient Number of Men of Letters, in proportion to the Number of Churches in this Kingdom.* But now others of a less fruitful Invention would have accounted for such an Institution in a plainer and more natural Way, viz. That it was meant as a Barrier or Security against Popish Doctrines. Till the Reformation was thoroughly settled and perfected, it was highly necessary and expedient for the Church to square her *Homilies* to her *Articles*, that so she might keep out those Errors in her *Sermons*, from which she had reformed in her *Liturgy*.— But your Opinion herein is not more uncommon than the Reasons

(r) Matt. v. & viii. \* Pag. 40. (s) Pag. 41.

sons upon which you found it, which is, *the Minister's being enjoined diligently to read over in the Week the Homily for the next Lord's Day, that he might not commit Blunders, when he came to read it to the Congregation.* But why to prevent Blunders only? A Man may read very ill, and yet make no Blunders. When you read over this doughty Performance of yours to your select Friends (if you had the Modesty to consult any) before it was published, I doubt not but as you had it so much at Heart you read it *without Blunders*: But you would hardly have thought you had done it, or yourself Justice, if you had not also read it *with all its Graces.* Why might not you therefore have conceived the same Reason for the Minister's reading over the Homily to himself before he read it to others? It is not, I'm sure, because you think the Homilies stand in Need of no such Advantages, but rather because they are not worthy of them, and therefore that it was only necessary the Minister should read them without Blunders; and if he could not do that except he read them over the Week before, you conclude he must be illiterate indeed.

But you are no less happy in another Reason for the general Ignorance of the Clergy, and consequently for the Use or Necessity of Homilies at the Time of the Reformation, and that is, the gross Stupidity of poor Bp. Longland, (t) *who preaching before King Henry VIII. on Good Friday,*

(t) Pag. 45.

day, unluckily mistook *Centurio*, the Name of a Military Officer, for the proper Name of a Man. And how doth this appear? Why from his saying, *Centurio*, and those that kept Christ to see the Execution done, cried, *Vere, &c.* This Argument looks very much like *felo de se*, and is proving the Bishop to be so good a (*Latin*) Scholar at least, that he had quite forgot his *English*, which otherwise might perhaps have inform'd him that *Centurio* signified the *Centurion*. And if it be further considered, that the mixing *English* and *Latin* in Sermons, was the Mode of Preaching in those Days, that Prelate will be brought off pretty decently; but how you will be able to acquit yourself of the grossest Ignorance, or the foulest Virulence, I cannot see. However let me advise you never to attempt Raillery for the future, since even a Bishop being the Butt, the Ridicule turns so full upon yourself. But now, supposing Bishop *Longland* to have been as great an Ignoramus as you would make him, how are we to conclude from thence to the general Ignorance of the Clergy of that Age? Do you think in the *Augustan* Age, in which Learning shone in its meridian Brightness, there was no dignified Blockhead in it? Or supposing yet further, that Learning was then at as low an Ebb as you would have it among the Clergy in general, yet how unreasonable is your Conclusion from thence to the Incompleteness of the Liturgy!



turgy ! For whatever the rest of that Body of Men might be, the Compilers of that Work were Men of unquestionable Learning and Abilities. ‘ And yet not trusting to their own Judgment, they consulted, *as the Doctor observes*, the most eminent of the Divines abroad, and had their Approbation of it. It was deservedly admir’d, says one, by all the Eastern Churches.’ And I can hardly suppose you ignorant of the Character given of it by the learned *Grotius*. ‘ Sure I am, says he, that the *English* Liturgy, also the Custom of Imposition of Hands upon young Persons in Memory of their Baptism, the Authority of Bishops, Presbyteries compos’d of Pastors only, and many other things of that Kind, are agreeable enough to the Institutes of the primitive Church, from which we cannot deny the *French* and *Dutch* Churches to have departed.’ *Grot. Ep. ad Boet.*

In the same plain and *rational Way* in which you account for the Use or Appointment of Homilies, you afterwards account for (u) *the composing of Publick Prayers ; that it was done with the same View, from an Apprehension of the same Necessity, not with an Intention that it should be drawn into Precedent for future Ages, but only to afford present Assistance to a Body of Clergy, then incapable of supporting the Ministerial Character with any Reputation without it. But this again may be accounted for still more plainly*

(u) Pag. 41, 42.

plainly and naturally, only by considering, that Publick Prayers or Liturgies were compos'd and us'd, as hath been shew'd, in the earliest and most learned Ages of the Church, and therefore that our Liturgy or Publick Prayers were not compos'd *in accommodation to the Ignorance or Incapacity of those Times*, but in Conformity to the Usage of pure and primitive Antiquity. — Tho' the last was a wretched Argument, the next is still worse, *viz. (x) The Custom for the Minister to pray without a prescribed Form in the Pulpit immediately before the Sermon, which, you say, was originally intended to promote free and unprescribed Prayer; and that the Institutors of that Custom hoped, as the Learning and Capacities of the Clergy increased, the other Way might be in a great Measure, if not totally laid aside.* All which is founded upon a notorious Falshood. The Prayer you speak of, if any Prayer at all, being a prescribed Form. (y) But the Truth is, 'tis no more than a Form of an Exhortation to Prayer, &c. Well: But (z) *this Distinction of the Doctor's betwixt the more learned and more ignorant, tho' you could allow it, had he been speaking of the Times of the Reformation, to have been unexceptionable; yet it seems very surprising to you in the present, when the Opportunities of being learned are so remarkable, if any are admitted amongst the Clergy, who deserve the Doctor's Epithet,*

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(x) Pag. 42. (y) See the 55th Canon. (z) Pag. 43, 44.

*Ignorant.* But upon my Word, Sir, strange as it may appear, daily Experience teaches us, that some will be ignorant amidst all the Opportunities of Information, as others will be obstinate amidst all the Means of Conviction.

But the Doctor is again unhappy in his Compliments to the Clergy, (whom I dare say in his Heart he never meant to abuse, and therefore I doubt not but they will forgive his *Inaccuracy*) in observing, that ‘ in every Profession there are always some of inferior Genius and Capacity, and therefore it is good for them to have such a Provision (as a prescribed Form of Prayer) made for them.’ — Upon which you remark, *(a) That by Profession here he can mean no other than Trade, Occupation or Employment, which from another Person the Doctor would have took very heinously, and have been as apt as any body to have charged him with Indecency of Language, and Disrespect to the Gown.* And yet I can tell you, the Doctor is not subject to take Affronts very heinously, since I’m firmly persuaded all the Scurrility of your Remarks was not able to move him to any thing but Laughter. He hath a Maxim always at Hand to reconcile him to such Indignities,

*Talem stultitiam contemnere, non imitari consuevi.*  
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(a) Pag. 44.



But pray, Sir, why must he by *Profession* necessarily mean *Trade*? St. Paul, when speaking of the Profession of a Christian, do you think he meant to call Christianity a Trade? or to throw any Disrespect upon the Christian Religion? No; but *here* it must signify Trade, because the Doctor says, *there are some of inferior Genius and Capacity in every Profession*. Be it so; but are there no Men of inferior Genius and Capacity in Law, Physick, or (which one would have thought a Person of your teeming Imagination should not have forgot) in Midwifery? All which are called not *Trades*, but *Professions*. — However, if the Doctor's Language is not so indecent as was suspected, his Argument at least is weak. Very well, procedas, domine, tuo more. (b) *For when a Man has serv'd an Apprenticeship to a Trade, if he turns out an indifferent Hand, or ever so little Master of his Profession, 'tis impossible to hinder him from setting up his Business; but in respect to the Clergy the Case will admit of no manner of Comparison, because after having been ever so long at the University, a Man cannot from thence assume the Office of a Minister, till he hath passed the antecedent Trials which are always requir'd, and always submitted to before they receive Orders from the Bishop, &c. To whose Door therefore must the Fault be laid, if the Doctor can find a Number of ignorant Men of inferior Genius and Capacity amongst his Brethren?*

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I answer. 'Tis very true, no Man can without the antecedent Trials you speak of, set up for himself *in* the Church, but *out* of it he may without either *Trial* or Education; as many bungling Artificers and unskilful Tradesmen have done, (to whom that Saying of one of the Popes, which you have given us in the Close of your Animadversions, *(c)* *Quantum lucri nobis tulit!* might be applied with a far better Grace than as it stands there,) which may perhaps be one Reason why our Prelates may be something less severe in their Examination of Candidates for Holy Orders. So that what you before unkindly laid at the *Bishop's* Door, you have now more charitably brought home to *your own.* *(d)* 'Tis very possible, you go on, *through the Conceit, Fondness, or Avarice of Parents, that some Youths may be sent to the Universities, that have no manner of Genius for Learning; and doubtless there are others, that thro' Idleness are incapable of going through such an Examination, &c.* And there's likewise another Possibility, which you might as well have remember'd, *viz.* That a young Gentleman of a good Genius and promising Parts, and no ways wanting at the Time of Examination, may afterward by Sloth, or Negligence, suffer that Genius to be spoil'd, and those Parts to die, or wither. This the Bishops cannot foresee; for as they pretend not to the Spirit of Prayer in the Sense in which some Enthusiasts claim it,

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(c) Appendix II. Pag. 71. (d) Pag. 46.

so neither to the Spirit of Prophecy. — Well, but (c) *when this happens to be the Case*, that Persons upon Examination appear unqualified, *What is to be done?* Is it not evident both from *Scripture and Reason*, that the Bishops ought to refuse them? Ought they not with Compassion to advise those they apprehend incapable from a natural Defect, to betake themselves to some Business that they may have a Capacity for; and with a due Severity to rebuke those who have mispent their Time and not improv'd their Faculties, and never to accept them till by Application and Diligence they have rendered themselves capable of the Office they would undertake? Why really you act the Bishop so well, that you have more Reason than I imagin'd to be offended at Subscriptions to Articles, since, for any thing I know, they may stand in your Way to the Chair of Canterbury. But be not discourag'd, for there is no Disgrace in a Man's altering his Opinion for good Reasons. And, believe me, the Primacy of all *England* may be sufficient to convince the most obstinate Man living, that the Doctrinal Articles of our Church are not absolutely Predestinarian, and that there is no Repugnancy betwixt those two which assert the *Power of the Church*, and the *Right of private Judgment*, which you, not having the Light of a Mitre before your Eyes, vainly suppose. However, till that irresistible Brightness shall persuade you that you may episcopize, 'tis very kind



kind in you to instruct the present Bench of Bishops, how they ought to behave to Candidates for Orders, and kinder still to allow that some of them (the Proportion you have not been so exact as to calculate, as you did in the Case of the subscribing Clergy in general) have acted up to your Rules. But after all I must beg leave to ask you one Question, and that is, Whether the Dissenters have no ignorant Ministers amongst them? When therefore you have found out a preventive Remedy, be pleased to communicate it to the Bishops of your further Grace and Compassion. In the mean Time the Doctor's Distinction of the *more learned and more ignorant Ministers* is very proper, and to the Purpose, and your Remarks upon it very ridiculous and impertinent.

The Doctor's next Argument in favour of a prescribed Form of Prayer is, ' that it better  
' establishes and secures the Unity of Faith and  
' Worship, hinders the Heterodox from infu-  
' ing their particular Notions in their Prayers;  
' which is perhaps the most artful and plau-  
' sible Way of infusing them, reduces all the  
' Churches to an Uniformity, prevents any Dis-  
' agreement or Contradictions in their Petitions,  
' and instructs them, as they worship the same  
' God, to worship him with the same Mind  
' and Voice; and finally, it is showing to all  
' the World the Terms of our Communion,  
' and

‘ and giving them a fair Opportunity of examining them before they join in it.’ — To which you answer, that (f) *to suppose the injoining of Forms of Prayer to be read by all Ministers, will make them believe all the Principles contained in them, is just as good Sense, as to suppose that all that subscribe the Articles required to be subscribed, do always believe the Doctrines they assert.* Why truly, I’m of Opinion, the Doctor never supposed any such thing; and that he would as soon have supposed the injoining the Gospel to be read by all Infidels would make them believe all the Miracles they contain. Well, but how then, you’ll ask, is it that a prescribed Form better establishes and secures the Unity of Faith and Worship? Why, not by forcing the Assent of the Minister, or preventing his *Insincerity*, but by preserving the People from *false Doctrines*; or, as the Doctor hath more happily expressed it, ‘ by hindering the Heterodox from infusing their particular Notions into their Prayers.’ But you go on: (g) *It is very certain a Man may subscribe a set of Articles, or read over a Set of Prayers, and not believe the Doctrines or Principles they contain.* Infallibly certain. Ay, and a Clergyman too. It is very well, you know, *if forty-nine out of fifty are not such Hypocrites.* How then? Why then, *how far such a Conduct is consistent with Sincerity, ought to be considered.* Considered? No, no, there we

(f) Pag. 49. (g) Ibid.

we may venture to pronounce extempore, or without Premeditation, that such a Conduct is very insincere. (*b*) *And for that Reason*, say you, *I am against both*, (*i. e.* against both subscribing and reading what you do not believe. But be not too sanguine, since I have put you in Mind of one powerful Argument, which may dispose you to think far otherwise) *it being an old Observation, that has been frequently and most justly made, that there can be no Articles drawn up but what an insincere Man will subscribe*; (no, I will undertake the Alcoran would not be a Camel too big for his Swallow) *nor can any Forms of Prayer be composed, but what an insincere Man will read.* (And you might as well have added, when your Hand was in, nor Oaths contrived which an insincere Man will not take. But now it will be Time to consider, are therefore no Oaths to be impos'd?) (*i*) *So that prescribed Articles and Forms will very probably exclude many honest conscientious Men out of the Church*, (which is great Pity, considering how few there are in it) *but prove no manner of Bar or Security against those of the contrary Character.* Indeed it may so happen, that some may be frightened by Subscriptions from entering into the Ministry; but it is a more tolerable Evil that a few honest conscientious Men should suffer a little in that respect, or rather I should have said, that the Church should sustain

(*b*) Pag. 50. (*i*) Ibid. & 51.



sustain so great a Loss in their Exclusion, than that all Order and Uniformity should be destroy'd. To prevent the one, prescrib'd Articles and Forms are a proper Expedient; I can think of none possible for the Prevention of the other, except such a Remedy as would be worse than the Disease. I'm afraid the Case will always be, that one Man will scruple every thing that suits not his Humour, that another will scruple nothing that suits his Interest, and that a third will be conscientiously scrupulous; and how to adapt Forms and Articles to all three, is something difficult; but if they are made agreeable to the Reason and Good-liking of Ministers and People in general, it is very well for the Doctor's Purpose, since it will establish and secure the Unity of Faith and Worship, better than if there were no Articles appointed. But now, according to your usual way of triumphing in the Confutation of your Adversary, when you have only been taking much unnecessary Pains to discover either your Ignorance or Disingenuity, you conclude, *(k) and of Course this very Argument which is produced in favour of prescribed Forms of Prayers, if duly regarded in its Consequences, is in reality one of the strongest Arguments against them.* We have had due Regard to the Consequences on both Sides, and leave the Issue to every unprejudiced Reader. Well, but what follows is, I suppose, to make the Matter still clearer; *for if a Minister who*  
*prays*

(k) Pag. 51.

*prays without a Form, mixes such Principles with his Prayers as I cannot assent to, I have an Opportunity of joining with another, who introduces none but such as appear to me consistent both with Scripture and Reason, but in the other Case there is no possible Remedy; but if there are Things unintelligible, unscriptural, or irrational, contained in those Forms that are prescribed by Power, and enforced by Penalties, I must always be disturbed with hearing them, &c.* You may indeed, upon such a capricious Approbation or Dislike of the Minister, leave *one*, and go to *another*, without having an Opportunity of examining properly the Principles of *either*; or, however quick and penetrating your Apprehension and Judgment may be, the People in general, who have the same Liberty, cannot be supposed equal to such an immediate Determination, and consequently must *heap to themselves Teachers*, not as Reason but Fancy directs. And this doubtless is an admirable Means of preserving Unity in Faith and Worship. But now in the other Case, which you assert to be remediless, there are two substantial Remedies.

‘ A prescribed Form shews to all the World  
 ‘ the Terms of Communion, as the Doctor  
 ‘ justly observes, and gives Men a fair Oppor-  
 ‘ tunity of examining them before they join in  
 ‘ it.’ Of examining them thoroughly and de-  
 liberately, and not in that hasty Manner, in  
 which alone they are to judge of extemporary

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Effusions, or of Prayers they never heard or read before; and after such full and fair Examination, should they not approve, they have still another Remedy, they are at Liberty whether to join or no, which is the very Privilege so much boasted of in the Case of praying without a Form. Have not you, hath not every Separatist that Indulgence? How therefore can you without blushing suggest, that our Liturgy *(l)* is prescribed by Power and enforced by Penalties? But if Forms of Prayer, when thus carefully and maturely weighed and examined, meet with their Approbation, then all who join in them agree in Heart and Voice, they *pray with their Lips, and pray with their Understanding also*. And Unity of Faith and Worship being thus established, is thus also best secured; since the People are less in Danger from the innovating Spirit of every private Minister, or of being removed from their common Principles, by his mixing his own private Notions with his Prayers. ‘Whereas (as the Doctor subjoins) if there be no regular stated Forms, we must have a sort of implicit Faith in every Minister, assent we know not why, and pray for we know not what.’ And this you call *(m)* *talking absurdly and unphilosophically, &c. because the Assent of the Mind always follows the Reality or Appearance of Truth*. Yes, but that the Assent of the Tongue may follow something else, you have shewed by

*l)* Pag. 51.

*(m)* Pag. 52.



by that modest and memorable Example of those forty-nine Hypocrites out of fifty Clergymen. And why may not a Man assent with his Tongue to what he doth not *understand*, as well as to what he doth not *believe*? Well, but now the Doctor is to be puzzled with this knotty Question, (n) *Whether he has it in his Power to refuse his Assent to the Proposition that two and two make four; or whether he can give his Assent to this, that two and three make six?* Why yes, I will answer for the Doctor that each of these is in his Power; and that you yourself, in your notable Remarks upon him, have sometimes boldly exercised a Power almost equal to it; but the Doctor is so excessive bashful, he durst not take the Liberty of speaking with his Tongue what he knows to be false in his Heart. (o) *Neither, say you, is it possible we should pray for we know not what.* But I have shew'd you that the one is possible (tho' not quite so decent) and I hope you will take our blessed Saviour's Word for the Possibility of the other, who told two of his Disciples, *desiring the one to sit on his right Hand, and the other on his left, in his Kingdom, that they asked they knew not what.* Had they been as good Philosophers as you, they might not perhaps have answer'd, that he *talk'd absurdly and unphilosophically, &c.* but they might possibly have suggested, as you do, that (p) *what we have no Idea of, can never be the Matter of*

*our Petitions.* But then a worse Reasoner than our Lord would have naturally replied, that altho' that about which they had *no Ideas at all*, could not be the Matter of their Petitions, yet what they had *wrong or confus'd Ideas* of, might easily be so, as was their Case then, and is too often the Case of those who join in extemporary Prayers.

To the Doctor's concluding that he had said enough to prove the Lawfulness and Expediency of set Forms of Prayer, you answer, that *(q)* *as to their Lawfulness you allow that a Prayer is not unlawful meerly because it is drawn up by another; but then, [i. e. to make it lawful] that Prayer must be of the general kind; it must comprehend none of the Points that are controverted amongst Christians, &c.* No really? not one Word of the Divinity, Satisfaction, or Merits of our Saviour? Not one Word of Justification, Free-Grace, the Efficacy of Faith, the Necessity of good Works, &c? Why this is strait Work indeed. At this Rate your free Prayer will be wretchedly stinted and confin'd, as well as our prescrib'd Forms; and the only unexceptionable *Christian Prayer* must be borrow'd from *Heathen Philosophers*. But your Reason for a Form of Prayer's containing in it no controverted Point is excellent. *(r)* *For, I hope, say you, the Doctor will agree, that no sincere Minister can with the external Marks of Solemnity and Seriousness, and with an express Exhortation*

*tation to the People to accompany him with a pure Heart and humble Voice unto the Throne of the Heavenly Grace, saying after him, pronounce those Things in a profess'd Address to the Divine Being, which he does not himself believe. Which plainly implies, that a sincere Minister cannot himself believe any Point which is controverted amongst Christians. But one Point, you know, is, whether a prescribed Form, or extemporary Prayer, is to be preferr'd in publick Worship. And yet you believe (for I must not doubt your Sincerity as you are out of the Church) that extemporary Prayer is much the best, and would not scruple to make the Continuance of that Way of Worship a Part of your Petitions.—But you proceed, (s) a Man that is capable of acting in such a Manner, [i. e. of solemnly exhorting the People to say after him Things he doth not believe himself] deserves a worse Term than those contemptuous ones, Crudities, Incoherencies, Freaks, Rants, Fanaticism, Enthusiasm, which the Doctor so liberally bestows on those who pray without a prescribed Form. Ay, or those which the other Doctor as liberally bestows on extemporary Prayer, 'confus'd, incoherent, impertinent Rhapsodies, 'by which God is dishonour'd, and the People 'unedified.' And happy is it for Dr. Newton, that it is of extemporary Prayer only that he speaks so freely, and yet less severely than Dr. Watts himself. 'Tis happy for him likewise, that*



that the Minister may solemnly and sincerely exhort the People to join with him in some Things which may be *controverted amongst Christians*, and may also hope, from the voluntary Attendance of the Congregation then present, that they are dispos'd, with a pure Heart and humble Voice, to accompany him to the Throne of the Heavenly Grace, saying after him. 'Tis further happy for him, that should there be any Point in which the whole Congregation were not agreed, Dr. *Watts* will give his Suffrage, that this would be no Objection to the Use of set Forms, who hath told you in his Treatise upon Prayer, (which you seem either not to have read, not to have remember'd, or not to have regarded) '(t) that it is not necessary that every Worshipper should lift up his Soul to God, according to every Sentence spoken in social Prayer, but only in such as are suited to his own Case and State, and such as he can sincerely speak to God himself.'

Tho' what you said before, that Hypocrisy is a worse Term than those contemptuous ones, *Crudities, Incoherencies, &c.* is so clear and satisfactory that no Man can doubt it, yet you will go on to illustrate, the more strongly to shew your Parts: (u) *For as Actions have, in many Cases, as expressive a Language as Words, the very pronouncing an Expression in a Form of Prayer, to which a Man gives no Assent, is downright Hypocrisy, and solemn Mockery of God.*

(t) Treatise on Prayer, p. 48: (u) Pag. 45.

*God.* Which is just the same as if you had said, For as Actions have, in many Cases, as expressive a Meaning as Words, therefore the very pronouncing Words in a Form of Prayer to which a Man gives no Assent, is downright Hypocrisy, &c. As I am inform'd it is in the Way of your Profession, I should be glad to be told what Figure of Speech you call this last Ornament crowded into your Argumentation, or by what Rule of Logick you distinguish betwixt pronouncing Expressions, and speaking Words.

As in this Sentence you have shew'd the *Perfection of your Reasoning*, so in the next is display'd the *Perfection of your Charity*. (x) *And if a Man should be ashamed of appearing with indigested Crudities before his Earthly Sovereign, much more ought he to be ashamed of appearing before his Heavenly Sovereign with Falshood in his Mouth, and Insincerity in his Heart; and whilst by his Actions [and why not by his Words?] he professes to pray to God, to have his Heart far from him.* — But now, Sir, supposing the Clergy in general to be a Pack of as errant Hypocrites, both in their *Prayers* and *Subscriptions*, as you out of your abundant Charity (that sublimeſt Character of a Christian, that Bond of Perfection) have over and over represented them, yet I hope the People may notwithstanding be sincere in their Prayers, yea, and that should they happen some of them to doubt

(x) Ibid. & 55.

doubt of *some Part*, they may, (and they have Dr. *Watts's* Authority for it,) join in *the rest*, it being not necessary, (as he observes, and which you will probably better remember for the Future) 'that every Worshipper should  
' lift up his Soul to God, according to every  
' Sentence spoken in social Prayer.'

(y) *As to the Expediency of set Forms of Prayer*, you say, *the great Benefit pretended by the Injunction of them, and Articles of Faith, is, to have all Ministers and private Christians of that Communion of the same Opinion.* Why really, such an universal Harmony would be a glorious Benefit, but never to be expected, and therefore not pretended to by the Church in consequence of prescribed Forms of Prayer and Articles; but this she pretends, and very justly, that where these are, there will be the greatest Unity both in Faith and Worship. And tho' it would be a vain Hope, ever to see the Day when there shall be a compleat and perfect Unanimity or Agreement in Sentiments amongst all Christians, yet it is the Duty of all to promote it to the uttermost; and whether will most contribute to it, Praying by a prescribed Form, which every one hath Liberty fully and freely to examine, or by extemporaneous Prayers, which will admit (as hath been shewed) of no such due Examination, let any Man of common Sense determine.

And



And now you have gone through-stitch with the Doctor; (z) *and there is nothing*, you say, in his general Reflections upon the Subject that affects the Argument betwixt you, but what hath been sufficiently obviated; except where he repeats what hath been said before, (and what, Page 28. you boasted you had then already confuted, tho' now it seems it is not sufficiently obviated.) *The People are only Hearers, and they must hear before they can understand, and they must understand before they can approve, and they must approve before they can join in any Petition, all which is impossible to be done in an Instant, while one is speaking.* Upon which you cry out, with as great seeming Surprize, at this *before-confuted* Objection to extemporary Prayer, as if it was quite new to you, (a) *How unaccountable is Bigotry and blind Zeal! Is there any greater Difficulty in understanding or not understanding, in approving or not approving, in joining or not joining in a Sentence considered as form'd into a Petition, or part of a Prayer, than it is to understand, approve or disapprove a Sentence considered as Part of a Sermon?* As you confuted the Objection before without obviating it, so now you have obviated without confuting it, as will appear by a Review of the Argument at large, in Pag. 20, 21 of this Book, to which I refer the Reader. But if this is a Difficulty attending extemporary Prayer, that the Hearer hath not Time to judge, nor consequently to join,

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(z) Page 57. (a) Ibid. and 58.

you have another not unlike it to oppose to set Forms; (b) *for it is very possible, and often complain'd of, that a Minister reads the Prayers with such a Rapidity of Pronunciation, not observing the proper Pauses and Periods, so as to confuse those that hear, and desire to join with him; and by this Means it becomes very difficult, if not sometimes impossible, for the Congregation to keep Pace with him: Through this Defect the Devotion of the People is dissipated and prevented, and the Intention of their Attendance defeated.*—And it is also very possible, and often complained of, and once I have shewed you by one who cannot be suspected to have complained without Cause, that in extemporary Prayers, they who use them are sometimes constrained to make long and indecent Stops, not knowing what to say next: And whether is it better, that the People should some of them be confused, (as you call it,) or that the Minister and People should be alike confounded? In the one Case indeed there is a Remedy. They who have Books cannot be so much at a Loss; and they who have none are so well acquainted with the Prayers, that they may join, tho' not with the same Devotion and Satisfaction as if the Minister perform'd more deliberately and devoutly; but in the other they cannot join at all: They may indeed pray by themselves, that he may find a Clue to lead him out of the Labyrinth into which his Rush-  
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ing into Prayer had brought him, but social Prayer must pause the length of his Pauses; the People must wait of him, whilst he is waiting for Inspiration; when 'the long indecent 'Stop' is got over, they may again run on with him, but perhaps only saying or assenting to Things 'little to the Purpose, in wandering 'far from the purposed Subject and Design, in 'uttering an incoherent, impertinent Rhapsody 'of Words,' the Consequence of his Confusion. *The same Observation (you take notice) may be applied likewise to a Sermon, and so it may just as wisely as the rest of your Applications; for what Sermons have to do here, I cannot see) which if rapidly or unjudiciously pronounced, (say you, or if the Preacher runs restive, or on the wrong Side the Post, say I,) becomes disagreeable, confus'd, and often unintelligible.* But the Doctor is so far oblig'd to you, that you allow him not to be one of those rapid, injudicious, unintelligible Preachers; for that *you understood his Sermon when you heard it, as well as you do now it is printed.* Yet I would advise the Doctor not to flatter himself, or conclude too confidently in favour of his Stile or Delivery, from his being so obvious to your Understanding, since I am perswaded, had you understood him at all, either from the *Pulpit* or the *Press*, you would not have expos'd yourself by such ridiculous Remarks, nor have assum'd a *Liberty*,  
K 2 which



which every Man of Sense, (c) *whether a Christian or a Briton*, or of whatever Religion or Country would be ashamed of; the Liberty, I mean, of censuring his Discourse so freely, without giving one plausible Reason for your Disapprobation.

(c) Page 59.



AN

A N  
**EXAMINATION**  
 O F  
**Mr. PHELPS's REFLECTIONS**  
 U P O N  
 Two Passages in Dr. *Newton's* Fast-Sermon, &c.

**H**AVING done with your Remarks upon the Dr's Sermon upon the Liturgy, let us now see what you have to say to that upon the Fast.

In which, it seems, *(a) there are two Passages which ought not to pass unobserv'd.* The 1<sup>st</sup> is, where he says. 'The Members of the Church of *England* and Protestant Dissenters now plainly perceive that they have one common Interest, as they have one common Danger, and we trust will unite as Brethren not only upon the present, but upon all future Occasions for the Publick Good, and watch and guard against Popery, which would equally destroy them both. Upon which *(b) you congratulate the Dissenters, and yourself amongst the rest, for that however roughly the Dr. bath us'd you in his Sermon on the Liturgy, insomuch that you was afraid he had thought you a meer Nuisance in Society, he has at last found you to be*

*good*

*good for something.* As to his rough Usage in the Liturgy Sermon, we must again cloak him under the auspicious Covering of Dr. *Watts*, who tho', as hath been shewn, he speaks with greater Severity of extemporary Prayer than Dr. *Newton*, never meant, I suppose, to use Dissenters *roughly*, or *look'd upon them as a meer Nuisance in Society*. But both the Doctors will be apt in this again to agree, that *he* is such a Nuisance, who endeavours to sow Discord and foment Differences amongst Brethren, only because he is contradicted in his Opinion; or roundly pronounces that Man a Hypocrite, who durst pretend he is in an Error. And then as to the Dr's Complaisance in his Fast Sermon, in hoping that you would unite with us as Brethren and watch and guard against Popery, which would equally destroy us both, the Caution is humane, tho' the Compliment is not great. 'Tis no more than hoping you would lend a helping Hand in the common Danger, and not suffer yourselves to be destroy'd, that we might perish in the same Ruins: Or behave like the Man who, the House being in Flames, refus'd to rise out of Bed, because he was but a Lodger. All the Merit therefore you claim from your late Assistance, in Stemming against Popery, is ill grounded. Besides, the Danger being *common*, the Obligation was *reciprocal*. You may call this being *good for something*, if you please, but doubtless 'tis no more than that *Heathenish* Goodness of doing good to them, who have done the same good



to you, which a *Christian* should by no means boast of.

The other Thing you remark is, (c) *that the Dr. in exposing and condemning some of our national Vices, has omitted the grand one of all, and that which ought to be stigmatiz'd as the Mother, in great measure, of all other Abominations, the Sacramental Test. As a Dissenter, you say, you look upon it as an unjust Abridgment of the natural Right of the whole Body. And suppose now, as a Churchman, the Dr. should look upon it as a natural Right, which every Constitution hath to protect and defend itself? But whatever his Opinion may be as to that Point, his excessive Modesty, I'm afraid, would restrain him, when call'd to preach before the Honourable House of Commons, from taxing the Legislature, (tho' your greater assurance hath made nothing of it) with an Act of Injustice, or from telling them the Fence which they, in their Wisdom, had thought proper to set about the Church, was the Grand national Sin of all, the Mother in great measure of all other Abominations. He might indeed, had he been of the same Faith and the same Face with you, have pleaded as you do, (d) the great Stedfastness of you and your Brethren under this long-continued injurious Law; and that tho' you had just Reason to hope your unmerited Fetters would long ago have been taken off, yet so unalterable was your Loyalty, (that you scorn'd meanly to revenge the Disappointment by exchanging Yokes* of

of Wood for Yokes of Iron, but) (e) *that you have still the Honour to repeat what you so justly gloried in on Occasion of the last, that in the present most unnatural and traiterous Rebellion, not a single Dissenter has engaged in it, in favour of a Pretender, who instead of Promotions under his Government, would not have indulg'd you with your Liberty either Religious or Civil. But tho' the Dr. being a modest Man, had not so favourable an Opportunity then of* (f) *soliciting your Cause, he may now do it with a better Grace; and to induce him to it you have furnished him with a couple of Arguments. The 1st is, that* (g) *if the Test be consider'd in the Light of the Law of Nature, and in Consistency with all the Ends of civil and national Societies, (the great Design of which is, to secure to all the useful Members of the Community, the equal Enjoyment of Liberty both religious and civil, and an equal Capacity of Discharging the Offices of the Common-wealth, when the Government thinks them qualified for any of them by their Ability and Integrity, without being fetter'd by negative Discouragements and undeserved Exclusions) nothing can be more evident to every honest, impartial Mind, than that the Test Act is most injurious and oppressive. Ay, and I will add most ridiculous and absurd, if the Government look'd upon those who do not approve of the natural Constitution equally qualified for discharging the Offices of the Common-wealth, with those who do.*  
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To have stated the Case fairly therefore, even according to the *Light of the Law of Nature* (as you elegantly express it,) you ought to have said, that the great Design of Society is to secure to all those who conform to it's *Laws* the equal Enjoyment of it's *Privileges*; which as no reasonable Man will deny, so neither will he pretend, that they who cannot conform to the *one*, have an equal Right to the *other*.

Suppose the People of this Island were in a State of Nature, but desirous to form themselves into a regular Society, and upon a general Consultation, the same Ecclesiastical Constitution should be agreed to be most proper, which now obtains in *Scotland*, or such as the Dissenters in *England* could wish, but that some few should dissent from the general Opinion, and choose rather an Episcopal Government; Would not the Majority have a Right to establish that Constitution they lik'd best? Would they not have a Right to use the best Means to preserve it? And would they not conclude very naturally and justly, that one of those means was to exclude all the Friends to Episcopacy from all Offices of Publick Trust? Would they not think it Indulgence sufficient to the Minority, if they were permitted to enjoy their own *private Liberty*, and laugh at their pretending a natural Right to such *Publick Employments* as would give them a Power to hurt or weaken the national Establishment? Undoubtedly. And it alters not the Case, whether the Compact upon which such Ecclesiastical Constitution was founded, be suppos'd to



be one Day, or 1000 Years old; the single Question is, whether it hath the Majority on it's Side.

That the Dissenters (*b*) are heartily attach'd to the Royal Family now happily settled on the Throne, as you hint, is not to be doubted, nor that they are well-affected (excepting those *negative Discouragements and Exclusions* you complain of) to the Civil Constitution; but that they are likewise so to the Ecclesiastical, will not be pretended; and surely (*i*) *nothing can be more evident to every honest, impartial Mind*, than that the same Confidence cannot prudently be placed in those who approve only of one Part of an Establishment, as in those who are Well-wishers to the whole. So that what you call an injurious and oppressive Law, when consider'd in this fair and proper Light, is no more than that wholesome and necessary Precaution which every Society will naturally use for the Security of the Constitution which it hath thought fit to establish.

Let us now view it in that other Light, of Christianity. In which, you say, it is totally subversive of the genuine Spirit and Intention of the Gospel. Yea, that (*k*) *the Sacrament is a double Profanation of this Sacred Ordinance [the Lord's Supper] as it is a Prostitution of what was instituted by Christ for spiritual Purposes, to a meer Qualification for a Temporal Office, and as it is a means of admitting to the Table of the Lord many that are unworthy the Name of Christians.* Had Bishop Longland told

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us, *the Sacrament is a double Profanation of the Sacrament*, I'm afraid we must have then brought him in an Ignoramus indeed; but as Mr. Phelps has given us so many flagrant Proofs of his great Abilities, we can readily suppose this *in him* to have been only an inadvertent Slip, and that by *Sacrament* he here means the *Sacramental Test*. But now for this Charge of Prostitution, let us see how that is founded. Why it seems *(1) there are Multitudes of Receivers, who are induc'd to it by the meer Lucre of an Office, who never did receive it before, nor ever repeat it, except the Qualification for a new Post requires it.* Without your Authority, I durst not have said there are any such insincere Persons as these. Had I declared myself as freely about Occasional Conformists, you would have thought I had us'd them *very roughly, and look'd upon them as a meer Nuisance in Society.* But doubtless you may take more Liberty with your Friends than would become me to do. But now to the Point, which is not whether there are any such *Prostitutes*, but where properly lies the Charge of *Prostitution*. Doth the Minister, instead of putting the Receiver in Mind of the *spiritual Purpose* for which the Sacrament was instituted, tell him he is to receive it *as a Qualification for a temporal Office?* No; but though he is not *himself* a Prostitute, he is the Occasion of Prostitution in *others*. Yes, just as much, and no more, than he who administers an Oath, is the Occasion of Perjury in him who swears *falsely*. The Receiving of the Sacrament is publishing to the World that



the Receiver is no Enemy to the *Ecclesiastical*, as the taking of the Oaths declares him who takes them to be no Enemy to the *Civil* Constitution. And surely such Declarations are very consistent with a Man's having at the same Time a due regard to the Religion of an Oath in the one Case, and to the Solemnity of the Ordinance in the other. And then as to *the admitting to the Table of the Lord many who are unworthy the Name of Christians*, it must be confess'd, they are unworthy of that sacred Name who offer themselves at the Lord's Table for the Lucre of an Office, their Consciences informing them at the same Time that their Conformity is unlawful. But would you then have the Ministers to be Judges when this is, or is not the Case? No; Was a Minister of the Church of *England* to Question the Sincerity of any Dissenter who offer'd himself as a Communicant, *whether ever he communicated before, or intended to repeat it, till the Qualification for a new Post requir'd it*, you yourself would probably be one of the first and loudest in clamouring against such an uncharitable Divine; nay I should wonder if you did not give the whole Body of the Clergy cause to *(1) wish he had not been quite so lavish of this sort of Compliments*, or if you did not sufficiently humble *them* for *his assuming* *Airs*. And yet now you seem displeas'd with them for admitting such Prostitutes. What therefore is to be done to make you easy? What? Why no longer to oppose the Repeal of that *unrighteous, detestable Act*, which will not give Men Power to weaken the Constitution of the



the Church without violating their own Consciences. But pray Sir, upon your frequent Applications in a Body to a late Minister for the Repeal of it, did the Clergy form a Body in Opposition? I never heard of any such. So that notwithstanding your asserting with your wonted Assurance that they are the *grand Opposers*, it appears from the ill Success you then met with, what was the Sense, not of the Clergy, but the *Legislature* about that Point. Well, but instead of the Opposition, perhaps you expect the Concurrence of the Clergy in return for the great Civilities paid them throughout your whole Book, and particularly for this last Farewell Compliment. (m) *And as they may be justly challeng'd to produce any greater Causes of the Propagation of Immorality and Infidelity amongst us than their Subscription to Articles which they do not believe, and their Admission of those to the Lord's Supper whom they know to be unworthy, let them no longer lament the increase of Vice, or the Growth of Deism, but reflect upon the Saying of one of the Popes, which I can assure them is frequently applied to them by the Deists: Quantum Lucri nobis tulit, &c.*—— As to the Clergy's subscribing to Articles they do not believe, which you have so often and so uncharitably charg'd upon them, 'tis more than *you* can possibly know; and as to the Worthiness or Unworthiness of those who are admitted to the Lord's Supper, 'tis more than they pretend to know. The Judgment of the Heart, which you have so freely exercis'd, is a Province which they, with all their *assuming* *Airs*, dare not take upon them.

And

And therein they *practice* that sublimest of all Virtues which you only *commend*, that *Charity* which *hopeth all Things*.—And then as to that Saying of one of the Popes, which you can assure them [the Clergy] is frequently applied to them by the Deists, *Quantum Lucri nobis tulit!* (by which you would insinuate that the Church of *England* makes the same Merchandize of Souls, or carries on the same gainful Traffick with the Church of *Rome*;) it appears how terribly you are distress'd when you are forc'd to borrow Assistance from Popish and Deistical Magazines. Every one except yourself will see clearly how easy it would be for me to retaliate; but I will take a Hint from the famous *Roman* Orator; *Non ausim dicere, ne cum te digna dixerō, me indignum quippiam dixisse videar.*

Cic. Lib. 4. *ad Herennium.*

Thus, Sir, have I considered your Remarks upon both Dr. *Newton's* Sermons, not with more Freedom than Impartiality; and really they have so much of the Rhapsody in them, that I am charitably inclin'd to hope they were *temporary*. Let me advise you therefore, before you attempt Controversy any more, not altogether to confide in the hasty, off-hand Conceptions of your *superior* Genius, but accept of the Ordinary Assistances of Study and Reflexion; that when you are about to write, you will condescend to consider first what (*n*) you are going to write about, *as to the true Nature of the Question, and the proper Arguments to be used on the Occasion; for on a Deficiency in either of these Respects, you may be justly said to tempt*  
your



*your Adversary to despise your Parts, and offend your Vanity.* And for want of such Forethought, you will be in Danger of being deficient in both these Respects. You will be apt to mistake the true Question sometimes at first, and sometimes in the Course of your Debate to change it for another; you will be betray'd into 'crude, rash, unseemly Expressions; be forc'd 'into impertinent Digressions, wander away 'from the Subject in Hand, and thereby tempt-'ed to Tautologies.' For what Dr. *Watts* observes of Praying, (o) is as applicable to Writing, 'Few attain to great Readiness and 'Regularity in it without Learning, by Preme-'ditation; for greater is the number of those 'Performances that are mean for want of 'thinking before-hand. This hath evidently been your Case. You have mistaken *extemporary*, or unpremeditated Prayer, for *free and unprescribed*. You have laid it thick on Dr. *Watts*, when you imagin'd you was lashing Dr. *Newton*; in rashly censuring and rudely sneering at the Trustees of Mr. *Hutchins*, you brought the Censure and the Ridicule full upon yourself; and whilst you fancied you was pouring out your Wrath upon the Clergy, you insulted the Legislature. You have drawn such imaginary Conclusions from the clearest Premises, as none but a Dreamer could have conceiv'd; but have been blind to those which flow'd truly and naturally from them. You have despis'd the Authority of the earliest Ages of the Church, as *Ages of Antichristian Superstition* and

(o) Vide Dr. *Watts* on Prayer, Page 38.



and *Popish Darknes*; and at the same Time vouchsaf'd to admit of the Evidence of *Justin Martyr*, who for such your Contempt of the rest of his ancient Brethren fairly left you in the Lurch, and gave his Testimony against you. Nor was Dr. *Prideaux* more civil to you, notwithstanding to bespeak his favour, you so handsomely complimented him with being *one of the greatest Ornaments of our Church*. So that for the future I suppose you will let the one rest quietly in the *Romish Calendar* and have nothing to do with the *Connexions* of the other. In short, you been bold in your Assertions, daring in your Challenges, but weak in your Arguments. You have introduc'd unlicens'd Figures of Speech into your Oratory, and unprecedented Methods of Reasoning into your Argumentation. And all these Misfortunes I am willing to hope might proceed from a strong Propensity to *Extemporary Effusions*. But however that be, if you meant not by your *Greek Motto* to give us a Specimen of your *Learning*, but truly and honestly to express your *Sincerity*, I hope you are by this Time convinced that you (p) did not think, or act aright, when you expos'd to the Publick your Animadversions upon Dr. *Newton's* Sermons, and therefore will not injure yourself by persisting in your Error and Ignorance.

(p) Vide Translation of his Motto.

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F I N I S.

